

THE ARMOR OF GOD

WEEK 4 — SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

INTRODUCTION

Tonight we come to the third piece of the armor of God. We've talked about truth. We've talked about righteousness. Now Paul brings us to our feet: "...with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

There's something surprising about that sentence. Paul is teaching us about warfare, and he puts peace on our feet. He's already told us about the devil's schemes, rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil. He tells us to put on armor and stand our ground. Then he says, **put peace on your feet.**

That tells us biblical peace cannot simply mean the absence of conflict, because Paul expects us to have peace in the middle of a battle. Jesus says in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble." Jesus puts peace and trouble in the same sentence. You can have both at the same time.

PEACE ISN'T THE ABSENCE OF TROUBLE. PEACE IS THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.

Some of us think, "If this changes, I'll have peace. If they change, I'll have peace. If the money works out, I'll have peace. If I get the answer I want, I'll have peace." But Jesus offers us something deeper.

And Paul says that peace belongs on our feet because BIG IDEA: **THE GOSPEL GIVES US FIRM FOOTING TO STAND ON AND FEET READY TO GO.**

BIBLICAL CONTEXT — JESUS IS OUR PEACE

Before we understand Ephesians 6, we need to go back to Ephesians 2 because Paul hasn't suddenly introduced the idea of peace. The church at Ephesus included Jewish and Gentile believers. These were people separated by deep religious, ethnic, and cultural hostility. But Paul says something happened through Jesus.

Ephesians 2:13 says, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Then verse 14 says, **"For he himself is our peace."**

Don't miss that. Paul doesn't merely say Jesus **gives** us peace. Paul says Jesus **is** our peace. Through His cross, Jesus reconciles us to God and tears down the dividing wall of hostility between people. Then verse 17 says, "He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near."

So by the time Paul gets to Ephesians 6 and tells us to put the gospel of peace on our feet, we already know what this peace looks like. The cross is at the center of it. We receive peace with God. We become people who make peace. Then we carry the good news of peace into the world.

If you want to remember tonight's message, remember three things: **RECEIVE PEACE. MAKE PEACE. CARRY PEACE.**

SCRIPTURE READING — EPHESIANS 6:10–18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Return to verse 15: "...and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

POINT 1 — RECEIVE PEACE

Before we can carry peace, we have to receive peace. The Greek word Paul uses here is *eirēnē*. But behind Paul's language is the Bible's rich idea of the Hebrew word *shalom*. Shalom is bigger than feeling calm. It describes wholeness, reconciliation, well-being, things being made right under the reign of God.

GOD'S PEACE DOESN'T JUST STOP THE FIGHTING. GOD'S PEACE MAKES BROKEN THINGS WHOLE.

And the deepest thing sin has broken is our relationship with God. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 5:10 goes even further and says that apart from Christ we were God's enemies. Our deepest problem isn't simply that we're stressed or that our circumstances are broken. Sin has made us enemies of the God who created us for relationship with Himself.

So our greatest need isn't simply inner calm. We need reconciliation. We need **peace with God**.

Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Peace with God is offered through Jesus and received through faith. We didn't earn it. We didn't achieve it. We couldn't fix what sin had broken.

WE DIDN'T MAKE PEACE WITH GOD. GOD MADE PEACE WITH US THROUGH JESUS.

Colossians 1:20 says Jesus made "peace through his blood, shed on the cross." God didn't make peace by pretending sin didn't matter. Jesus dealt with sin at the cross. He took our guilt and bore the consequence of our rebellion so that we could be reconciled to God.

And this means if you are in Christ, your peace with God isn't based on how well you performed this week. It's not based on how spiritual you feel tonight. It rests on what Jesus has already done.

There's an important difference between **peace with God** and the **peace of God**. Peace with God is our reconciled relationship with Him. The peace of God is what begins to fill and guard us because we know where we stand with Him. Philippians 4:6–7 says that as we bring

everything to God in prayer, “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

So somebody needs to hear this tonight: **YOU CAN HAVE PEACE IN A SITUATION THAT HASN'T CHANGED BECAUSE YOUR STANDING WITH GOD HAS CHANGED.**

That's why peace belongs in the armor. When fear comes, you can stand. When anxiety comes, you can stand. When accusation comes, you can stand. When circumstances change, you can stand. Your peace isn't ultimately rooted in what's happening around you.

Ephesians 2:14 says, **“He himself is our peace.”**

POINT 2 — MAKE PEACE

But the gospel doesn't stop with peace for me. People who receive God's peace should become people who make peace.

Go back to Ephesians 2. Jesus “has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.” The cross doesn't merely create forgiven individuals. The cross creates a reconciled people. Different cultures, generations, and stories become one family in Jesus.

This is an important part of holiness. For us as Wesleyans, holiness is not merely what God removes from us; it is the holy love of God filling us and transforming the way we love Him and love others. If the love of Christ is filling us, it should change how we respond to conflict, offense, disagreement, and division.

HOLY PEOPLE SHOULD BE PEACEMAKING PEOPLE.

And this is where peace connects directly to spiritual warfare. Remember what Paul told us in Week 1: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood." People are not the enemy.

The enemy wants to divide what Jesus died to bring together.

That's why **PEACEMAKING IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE.**

Every time we choose forgiveness instead of bitterness, repentance instead of pride, and unity instead of unnecessary division, we refuse to participate in what the enemy wants to do.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers." He doesn't simply say blessed are the people who like peace. He says blessed are those who **make** peace.

But biblical peacemaking doesn't mean avoiding truth to keep everybody comfortable. Jesus didn't make peace by pretending sin wasn't serious. He dealt truthfully with what had broken the relationship.

Sometimes peacemaking requires a hard conversation. Sometimes it requires saying, "I was wrong." Sometimes, "Will you forgive me?" Sometimes, "I forgive you." And sometimes peace requires healthy boundaries.

Romans 12:18 gives us the balance: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." You can't control another person's response, and you can't force reconciliation. But as far as it depends on you, don't let pride, bitterness, or unforgiveness keep the war going.

Second Corinthians 5:18 says God "reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." Notice the order. First,

God reconciles us. Then He sends us to become people of reconciliation.

PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE GOD'S PEACE SHOULD BECOME PEOPLE WHO MAKE PEACE.

POINT 3 — CARRY PEACE

Now come back to Ephesians 6:15: "...with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

That word "readiness" matters. The gospel gives us firm footing when we need to stand, but it also prepares us to move when Jesus tells us to go.

And this is where Scripture interprets Scripture. Paul's language about feet, good news, and peace reaches back into Isaiah. Isaiah 52:7 says, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace..."

Isaiah uses the Hebrew word *shalom*. But notice what the messenger is actually announcing. The verse ends with the words, **"Your God reigns!"**

That's why there can be peace. **WE CAN WALK IN PEACE BECAUSE GOD IS ON THE THRONE.**

The gospel of peace isn't positive thinking. It is good news about what God has done and the announcement that our God reigns.

And then, one chapter later, Isaiah tells us how this peace would come. Isaiah 53:5 says of the suffering servant, "The punishment that brought us peace was on him."

Look at the biblical story. **Isaiah 52: God reigns. Isaiah 53: our peace is paid for. Ephesians 2: Jesus is our peace. Ephesians 6: now put that peace on your feet.**

JESUS MADE PEACE AT THE CROSS. NOW WE CARRY THAT PEACE TO THE WORLD.

Paul makes the connection again in Romans 10. He asks how people can believe if they haven't heard, and how they can hear unless someone tells them. Then he quotes Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

The gospel was never meant to stop with us. Someone carried it to you. Someone preached to you, invited you, prayed for you, opened the Scriptures with you, or told you what Jesus had done for them. Somehow, somebody carried the gospel close enough for you to hear it.

SOMEONE CARRIED THE GOSPEL TO YOU. NOW CARRY IT TO SOMEONE ELSE.

Your mission field may be your workplace tomorrow. Your neighborhood. Your classroom. Your family. The grocery store. The gym. It may simply be the person who tells you they're struggling and the Holy Spirit says, "Pray for them," or "Tell them what Jesus has done for you."

You don't have to know everything to be ready.

READINESS MEANS MY YES IS ALREADY ON THE TABLE.

"Jesus, if You send me, I'll go. If You open the door, I'll speak. If somebody needs prayer, I'll pray. If You give me an opportunity to tell somebody about You, I'll take it."

The good news we carry is simple: **THROUGH JESUS, YOU CAN HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.**

GOSPEL CONNECTION — PEACE, THEN SENDING

Everything comes back to Jesus. Ephesians 2:14 says, “He himself is our peace.” Isaiah 53 says the punishment that brought us peace was placed upon Him. Jesus bore our sin, carried our guilt, made peace through His blood, died, was buried, and rose again.

Then something beautiful happens in John 20. The risen Jesus appears to His disciples and says, **“Peace be with you!”** Then He tells them, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Notice the order. **PEACE. THEN SENDING.**

Jesus gives them peace, then He sends them with His mission.

That's Ephesians 6:15.

THE GOSPEL GIVES US FIRM FOOTING TO STAND ON AND FEET READY TO GO.

BOTTOM LINE So if somebody asks you tomorrow, “What did you learn at church?” you only need to remember three things:

RECEIVE PEACE. MAKE PEACE. CARRY PEACE.

CHALLENGE — GET YOUR SHOES ON

So let me ask you two questions tonight.

1. Where do I need the peace of Christ?

2. Where is Christ asking me to carry His peace?

[SIT DOWN. PICK UP SHOES.]

Every morning we do something without even thinking about it. We get dressed. We get ready. And eventually, we put our shoes on.

[BEGIN PUTTING ON FIRST SHOE.]

Because putting your shoes on means you're getting ready to go somewhere. And I wonder if something this ordinary could become something holy for us.

Paul says, "...with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

[PUT ON FIRST SHOE.]

So what if every morning when you put on that first shoe, you remembered: **I HAVE RECEIVED PEACE.**

Because of Jesus, I have peace with God. I don't have to earn His love today. I know where I stand because Jesus is my peace.

[PUT ON SECOND SHOE.]

And then you remember: **I WILL MAKE PEACE.**

Wherever these shoes take me today, I don't want to carry bitterness or hostility. I want to carry the character of Jesus. I want to be a peacemaker.

[BEGIN TYING SHOES.]

And then: **I WILL CARRY PEACE.**

Somewhere these shoes take me today, there may be somebody who needs Jesus. I don't know who God will put in front of me. I don't know what conversation He will open. But I can decide before I ever leave the house:

MY YES IS ALREADY ON THE TABLE.

"Jesus, if You open the door, I'll speak. If somebody needs prayer, I'll pray. If You give me an opportunity to share the gospel, I'll take it."

[FINISH TYING SHOES. PAUSE.]

Isaiah said, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace."

Somebody carried that good news to me. Somebody carried it to you.

Now it's our turn.

[STAND.]

So tomorrow morning when you put your shoes on, remember:

I HAVE RECEIVED PEACE. I WILL MAKE PEACE. I WILL CARRY PEACE.

And then ask one simple question: **"JESUS, WHERE ARE WE GOING TODAY?"**

Church, **get your shoes on.**

INVITATION / ALTAR RESPONSE

Before we leave, maybe tonight you need the peace of Jesus. Your heart is anxious. Your mind won't stop. Your circumstances are uncertain.

Jesus says in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." If that's you, come and let us pray with you.

Maybe there's a broken relationship and the Holy Spirit is calling you toward repentance, forgiveness, or reconciliation. Come and pray, **"Jesus, make me a peacemaker."**

Or maybe while I've been preaching, God has already put someone's face in your mind. Someone who needs Jesus. Someone you've been praying for. Someone you've been afraid to talk to. Come with their name on your heart and pray, **"Jesus, make me ready."**

We don't want to be a church that only knows the gospel. **We want to carry the gospel.**

Receive peace. Make peace. Carry peace.

WEEKLY COMMISSION

Tomorrow morning when you put your shoes on, pray: **"Jesus, thank You that I have peace with God because of You. Make me a person of peace today, and keep me ready to carry Your gospel wherever You send me."**

Then ask: **"Jesus, where are we going today?"**

Look for the person. Look for the opportunity. Listen for the Holy Spirit. And when He opens the door, go.

BLESSING

May **God the Father**, who reconciled us to Himself, establish you in His peace. May **Jesus Christ the Son, who Himself is our peace**, make you

a peacemaker. And may **the Holy Spirit** steady your feet and keep you ready to carry the good news wherever God sends you. **Receive peace. Make peace. Carry peace.** And church, **get your shoes on.** Amen.