***The Full Armor of God - Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

The Suffering of Spiritual Combat, No. 6 - PH31-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:28-30***

Victory on the battlefield requires doctrine. It requires tactics; it requires equipment; and, it requires how to use that equipment, and how to use those tactics. The New Testament uses warfare, therefore, as an illustration of the spiritual combat in this church age with the demonic angels in which you and I are engaged. This spiritual warfare has a specific role and a specific way of conducting it, and of a destiny. Spiritual warfare requires equipment for the believers to be able to survive and to be victorious. The objectives of the demons was once to frustrate the expression of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. When that finally failed and Christ returned to heaven, the objective now of the demon enemy is you, the individual believer--to frustrate you and to incapacitate you in your spiritual service and in your warfare. You are now the target so that the point is to prevent you from producing divine good.

Every Christian is in this angelic conflict, and each of you has some specific role. This gives purpose and meaning to your life, and I'll tell you nothing else will. You might be thinking at this moment that purpose and meaning in your life is the woman you're married to; is the children that you have in your family; is the business that you conduct; or, is the ambitions that you're going to fulfill when you are through with your education; your profession; your income; or, your achievements. You have a meaning and you have a purpose, and you will miss it completely and bring much suffering, tragedy, and sorrow in your life if you think it is something other than this combat in which you are engaged as a believer. Unless you put this upon your mind first and unless this carries the highest priority of the preparation and the investment and the use of your life, you will come down and miss the point.

If you're young, I'm warning you right now that in the zealousness of your youth you will be looking forward to what you're going to do someday, and the excitement of the thing you're in at the moment, but it's going to go stale. The time will come when the bottom will fall out of it, and you will ask yourself, "Why am I doing all this?" That is why some of the wealthiest people in the world finally stick a gun up to their head and pull the trigger--because they have lost meaning and purpose, as one famed personality did a few years ago. He said, "I just am too bored with living." So, he killed himself. And everybody was shocked because he sat on the top of the world. He had everything. Every Christian is in this conflict.

**The Full Armor of God**

Your protection in this spiritual combat includes what Ephesians 6 calls the full armor of God. This angelic warfare is against you as a believer, and it brings you much undeserved suffering. Some of you are suffering in one way or another, and you don't deserve it. The reason you're suffering is because of the demonic activity against you. The more you have developed a spiritual maturity within your soul through the Word of God, the more you have not looked upon your friends; your family; your business; your social life; and, everything that we have in this world as being the meaning and purpose and fulfillment of your life, the closer you have come to playing your role in this spiritual combat, and the more undeserved suffering is going to be directed toward you. The more attack there will be upon your mentality in order to divert your thinking from what God has planned for you. This angelic warfare brings us suffering.

The Christian who is not moving along with the Lord; the Christian who is not positive to the Word of God; and, the Christian who is not receptive to Bible doctrine will not suffer too much. This is because Satan couldn't care less about you, and the demons don't find you to be any problem. However, if you start getting in there in the Word of God, and you start throwing your weight in the advancement of the Lord's work, you will start having the maturity to be able to do some real spiritual combat. You start getting some training, and you start learning your tactics; your doctrine; your goals; and, your procedures, and you're going to find things happening to you that never happened before. The thought will cross your mind, "Why is this happening to me when this stumblebum down the street here who is an unbeliever is riding at the top of the waves? Why does this Christian, who is just as indifferent and carnal as can be, seem to have everything coming up roses for him?" Well it's undeserved suffering because your life is counting in the spiritual warfare in which you are engaged. For you to survive, you have to know the parts of the armor; how to use them; and, how to proceed to develop them.

We have looked at some of these already. First of all, we have looked at the belt of truth. We have seen that the belt of truth is Bible doctrine which is secured through the grace system of perception. Secondly, we have been told to put on the breastplate of righteousness. Righteousness is the spiritual maturity structure in the soul which produces right conduct in us. These two are mentioned first, and they certainly are top priority. You must have the belt of truth, which is Bible doctrine, stored in your human spirit if you are going to be able to fight for the Lord and survive. Otherwise, I'll tell you what you will do. If you don't have the belt of truth, you're going to start fighting on human fleshly terms. You can walk through that magnificent Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, Virginia, and you can see the variety of approaches to human combat. You can see the techniques; the tactics; and, the fantastic, magnificent, brave, imaginative things which were done. However, that doesn't work in spiritual warfare. You can't use the same set of doctrine. You can't approach this on a human capacity basis. You have to have the doctrines of the Word of God, and you have to have the breastplate of righteousness which is the five facets of spiritual maturity developed so that your conduct is right. You cannot meet Satan and his host when your conduct is not right.

**Shoes of the Gospel of Peace**

If you'll turn to Ephesians 6, we'll pick it up at verse 15 which gives us the next item in the order of the protective armor which is the soldier's shoes. We're going to look at the feet--the footwear which is called here the gospel of peace. A soldier's effectiveness in battle is very much dependent upon his feet. This is because it determines his ability to move around. Eventually, a war is fought by people moving around on their feet. Some people think you can win a war by having bigger battleships and bigger aircraft carriers to send planes to bomb that take care of the enemy. Eventually, that can pulverize things. But the time comes when the infantry, on foot, has to go in and take the ground, or no battle is ever won. Eventually, a war is won on the basis of the feet. In the military service feet are very important.

One of the things the Marines on Guadalcanal discovered was that it was important to keep your feet dry. It became part of Marine Corps doctrine to have an extra pair of socks, and you were in deep trouble if you didn't have an extra pair of dry socks in order to avoid the jungle rot to your feet that was so readily available when your feet became damp and didn't dry out. Many Marines were very quickly incapacitated because they did not take care of their feet. They were blistered; they were diseased; they couldn't move; and, they were out of action. A soldier with blistered cut-up feet is of no use in combat.

This is so important that one of the display cases at Quantico actually has the boondockers (the shoes) that general Shoup, one of the greats of the Marine Corps, wore through several of the Pacific campaigns. There they are all twisted and turned and scrounged up. I can see why he would have worn the same shoes. You might have said, "Why didn't you get a new pair of boots to go into combat? You might be killed. Die with a new boot on." But the old one was comfortable. The old one was broken in. The old one was necessary to keep him moving in his position of command. There you have them--right in the case. You'd say, "What would they put boots in there for?" Because feet are important in combat. Feet are very vitally important to a commander who above all has to be able to keep moving.

So, in Ephesians 6, therefore, the apostle Paul very naturally sits there and looks down at the soldier of the Praetorian Guard who is on duty, and he looks at his feet. What's he going to see on the feet of a Roman soldier? It reminds him of something that enables a Christian to move about. He looks at the feet of that soldier, and he knows that that soldier is wearing a foot gear which will give that soldier a capacity to keep moving in battle. The Christian also has something that it is essential that he should have to keep moving in battle. Motivation is what we're talking about. Without it, he will break down. He will be incapacitated.

So, verse 15 says, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The word "shod" in Greek is "hupodeo." That comes from two words. One is "hupo" which means "under." The other is "deo" which means "to bind." So, the word means "to bind under." In other words, have your feet bound under with something. What this denotes is a soul which is tied to a foot. You and I today call it a sandal. We take a sandal and it is bound under the sole of our foot for us to walk on. The Roman soldier in combat wore a thick-soled sandal which had straps that came up over the instep and then wrapped around his ankle, and was securely tied to the ankle to keep it in place. This thick soul had nails coming through to the outside as studs in order to give him traction and capacity to move about with stability in combat. Hand-to-hand combat was fast movement. It was fast turning. It was fast running and stopping. Therefore, it was essential to have foot gear which contributed to that kind of agility. This sandal was designed to be able to protect the feet of the Roman soldier and to keep him moving in battle.

This word is in the aorist tense which refers to the readiness for spiritual combat, a series of preparations. It is in the middle voice, which means you prepare yourself for this role--your conduct and your destiny in the angelic conflict. It is a participle. Because it is an aorist participle, you remember that this gives us a clue that putting this kind of foot gear on is going to come before the main thing that God has called upon you to do in this passage which is back in verse 14, and that is to stand. We are to stand victoriously in battle. Before you can stand victoriously, the aorist participle grammatical form shows us that first of all you have to put this foot gear on your feet.

The word "with" (your feet shod "with") is the Greek preposition "en" and it means "by means of." "Your feet shod by means of," and the thing that we put on as a sandal is called the preparation. That is the Greek word "hetoimasia." Basically, "hetoimasia" means preparation. That's all it means. But it means a preparation that results in a readiness. It's a preparation that puts you on call.

In the Marine Corps, one of the concepts of marine doctrine is constant preparedness. The motto is "Always Faithful." The implication is at any moment, in the national interest, the Marine Corps is ready to be called upon to take care of the immediate problem. Thus, the expression from the past, "The Marines have landed," and the situation is well in hand. That has not always been the case immediately, but ultimately it always has been.

This word "preparation," noting your readiness, means a readiness for you to move into the angelic conflict. It refers to the foot gear which makes you ready to plunge into the fight. You don't have sore spiritual feet to dissuade you. A soldier who's moving in battle over rough ground with unprotected feet is going to lack motivation to get into the fight. You're not going to want to move very far if your feet are not protected, and if they're getting bruised and injured. So men are ready to stand firm against the enemy's assault, and to run after the attacker in pursuit when he's repelled. The issue here is motivation. That's what this is talking about--to have proper motivation. This is not talking about your personal salvation. That comes a little later as a helmet that you put on. This is talking about motivation. That's a problem that we have--motivation to serve the Lord, not the least of which, indeed, is with this gospel of peace. We need motivation to give people this information concerning eternal life.

So, he says it is this gospel of peace that we are to be motivated with. The word gospel is "euaggelion." "Euaggelion" is translated in English as "gospel." Our English word "gospel" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "godspell." "Godspell" means "the God story." "The God story" was described by William Tyndale, the man who was so prominent in translating the first version of the Bible into English. William Tyndale said of the gospel that the word signifies the good, merry, glad, and joyful tidings that make a man's heart glad, and makes him sing, dance, and leap with joy. The whole point there is that "gospel" means something that's good to hear. It is a joyous proclamation of God's activity in man's redemption on behalf of those of us enslaved by sin. It is "good news," which is the way we generally put it. It is a gospel of peace. The Greek word "peace" is "eirene." "Eirene" simply means that which has been bound together. It refers to the harmonious relationship between God and man. It is a tranquil state which is accomplished by the gospel. It is a state which releases us from fear, and gives us an eager courage to move out.

A soldier who is in a condition of fear or a condition of uncertainty is a soldier who is going to be hesitant to move out in battle. That's the point. The gospel of peace puts our souls at rest relative to God. Most of you, probably, as believers, sit here without any fear about facing God. Sooner or later, you will face God. You think about that; you project that; you imagine that; and, you do it without any particular fear. This is because you have received the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and that gospel has told you that God the Son, taking on human form, died for the sins of the world which covered you completely, and God is offering you salvation on the basis of what He has done. Having accepted that, peace has flooded your soul. You're at ease. You're not going to be ready to engage in the Lord's service if, in your heart, there is the problem of your fear of meeting God eating away at you.

You think back historically upon Martin Luther, one of the great reformers. Martin Luther went through all kinds of things, including almost killing himself physically in order to pay for his sins and in order to bring peace to his soul. No matter what he tried, and no matter what he did in his works, as a monk in the Roman Catholic Church of the Augustinian order, he could not bring peace to his soul. Therefore, he lived in a fearful condition. He moved through life with hesitancy and concern. But once he found peace through the gospel, and once he realized what justification by faith was, then he became a raging lion. We have many timid religious people for the simple reason that they do not have the motivation that comes from a heart which is at peace, relaxed, and settled in its relationship with God. Luther turned the Roman Catholic Church upside down once he secured peace with God. Then he was ready to get out there into the angelic conflict and into the battle with the satanic host.

This is victory in spiritual combat because a man has come to peace with God in his soul. Now he has motivation as he could not have otherwise. You're not going to be worth anything. You are worth nothing as a soldier in the Lord's army unless you have the motivation of this peace. But that gives us the drive. In the Marine Corps, we call it the esprit de corps. That's what this verse is talking about. The Lord knows that someplace in a soldier's equipment has to be esprit de corps. There has to be something that gives him a gung ho motivation that when the ramp drops, he takes his rifle; he gets out of the landing craft; he heads across the beach; and, he comes to grips with the enemy. He cannot do this if he is fearful and uncertain.

So the point here is not personal salvation of the Christian soldier, nor is it his ministry of bringing the gospel to the lost, though that's part of his service. That comes a little later. This is recognition of the marvelous consequences of believing the gospel, and of the nightmare of rejecting it. If you ever stop and think to yourself what it's like for a person who rejects Jesus Christ to spend eternity in the lake of fire, you will suddenly find yourself with a fantastic motivation. You look into the eyes of your father and your mother as unbelievers, and all of a sudden, it's going to be really much easier for you to talk to them about the Lord. You look at that parent, and you recognize the eternity that they're going to spend without Christ. You look at those children; you look at those friends; you look at those people you work with; and, you put yourself in the place of pain of flame that never ends, and you have the motivation that the gospel of peace brings, because you know on the one hand there can be peace with God. However, on the other hand, if you do not have God's peace, you will have His wrath against you, and the people who reject Christ the Savior are going to face exactly that.

So, the troops lacking motivation to do battle cannot conquer. Satan carries on his campaign to defeat and to discourage. But Satan also carries on his campaign of motivation. Last week in New York City, I stood on Fifth Avenue before Rockefeller Center. On the sidewalk were a group of young men in yellow saffron colored robes. Their heads were shaved bald, and they had a little pig tail sticking out there behind. They were beating drums. One of them was standing with a great banner fluttering in the breeze and it said Hare Krishna. Here was this fellow on a microphone, and a crowd was gathered around. Here were these fellows, and this boy was on a microphone. You know, he was saying so much that was right. I was listening to this, and I was waiting for the punchline to come through, but it never came. Here were these fellows, willing to be the brunt of ridicule, standing out there in their goofy shaved heads with all their signs, and talking about how the world needs something. Everything was right that he said was the problem. However, he missed the point of the gospel. But he had motivation. He was doing a work of human good right there on Fifth Avenue in New York City. Satan was behind what he was doing. He was just as sincere as he could be, but he was missing the point.

What we have been describing for you in this motivation of peace is really the doctrine of reconciliation. What has come to us in peace is reconciliation. Reconciliation is peace with God because we have accepted what God has done to remove the wall between us and Himself. God doesn't need to be reconciled. There's nothing wrong with Him, but there is something wrong with you and me, and we need to be reconciled to Him. When we are, then we have peace in our minds. It is God in man being brought together through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The sinner is adjusted to God's holy character.

Reconciliation is potentially for the whole world. I want you to understand that. Every one of you can be reconciled to God. Every one of you can come to this experience of peace (2 Corinthians 5:19, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:1-2). God has so completely established reconciliation that he is actually now, the Bible tells us, no longer imputing sin to the world (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). The agent of all this is the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, as Romans 5:10 explains to us that our trust in Him is the means to our reconciliation. The issue now for all unbelievers is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Reconciliation**

But just in tying this up, let's look at the work of reconciliation. It is sin that draws out against the individual the fearful justice of God. This justice is expressed in several ways. It draws out the enmity of God against evil (1 Corinthians 15:25, Romans 11:28, James 4:4). It draws out the wrath of God against the sinner (Romans 1:18, Romans 2:5-9, Ephesians 2:3-5, Colossians 3:6). It draws out God's judgments against the sinner (Romans 1:24-32, Romans 2:3-16, Romans 3:6-19, 2 Corinthians 5:10). It draws out God's vengeance (Romans 12:19, 2 Thessalonians 2:8). It brings upon the sinner the curse of the broken law (Galatians 3:10).

Reconciliation removes all of these things which cause us not to have peace--all of these fearful things that are against us because of our sin. Romans 5:9-10 tell us that this is all removed. The cross is the point of reconciliation (Colossians 1:20). The result is ultimately complete sanctification. This is a state where you no longer sin again. That happens when you are in the Lord's presence (Colossians 1:21-22).

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 tell us that you and I are the ministers of this reconciliation. Our readiness for spiritual combat finds one expression in the form of witnessing to the gospel. That's part of the battle with the demonic agents--of the enemy--of Satan. The demonic angels do not want us to present the gospel. You and I know (I need not stress the fact) that you and I have a problem doing this. You and I would be probably very embarrassed, and we feel a little hesitant and a little ashamed in our own hearts as we think back: when was the last time that you did any kind of real clean cut witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ to the gospel? When did you have the motivation that comes from knowing that you are at peace with God, and knowing the horror that lies out there for those who do not receive Him, that you rose to say, "I want to tell you how you can escape that?" Readiness for spiritual combat finds one expression in the form of witnessing to the gospel.

**Witnessing**

There are several issues on witnessing to the gospel that we should look at. The first issue is that you must have a knowledge of the plan of salvation that's necessary for witnessing. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Acts 16:31, and John 3:16 all express the gospel and what to do with it. What is the goal of witnessing? What is it that you're out to do when you find yourself with somebody who is on the way to the lake of fire? Well, your goal is to give him some information. You need to give him some information which he needs in order to be able to change his destiny from hell to heaven. That's what your job is. You can't communicate that information if you don't know it.

Don't presume that Christians do know it. You would be surprised at how many Christians find it hard to say what a Christian is. I even see this on application forms of people who want to teach in our Christian school here. One of the questions we ask them is, "What is a Christian?" You'd be surprised at the answers from adult people who are indeed believers when it comes to explaining what a Christian is. You have to know exactly what is involved in being born again. To lead an unbeliever to faith in Christ is the work of God the Holy Spirit. To give him the information, on the basis of which the Holy Spirit leads him, is your job. That's why you have to know what to communicate.

Don't try to force a decision. There are many devices trying to force decisions upon people to get people to commit themselves to Christ. Public moves to come forward to an altar or to a prayer rug is human theatrics, and it is not involved in salvation. Last week, while we were in Washington, D.C., we were at the Smithsonian Institute. As we came out finally at 9:00 o'clock at night after they closed the doors, we heard a loud speaker. Right down there on the mall between the Capitol building and the Washington Monument, down toward the Capitol, there was a crowd gathered. There were huge highway trucks with the words "Christ is the Answer" on them. There they had been holding an evangelistic meeting, right there on the mall. We came up just at the end, and now came the crucial thing. I stopped. I was curious to listen. I didn't know how much gospel had been presented in the service.

The very first thing the man said was, "Now, you want to be saved. I want you to come out of your seats, and come down front here, and kneel on this rug." He had a sinner's rug up there to kneel on. And right away, a few people moved out. Because I'm in the profession, I know what to look for. I looked and there they were, each of them carrying their Bibles. Sinners were coming to the salvation rug with a Bible under arm. They weren't the sinners. They were the sinning Christians who were coming up to prime the pump. You could see that this had been set up before the service. They had said, "I'll give the invitation, and Sam, Joe, and Sally, you come first; and then, Mike, Abbey, and Caledonia, you come next. Come up front here, and we'll get the ball rolling.

This is the theatrics. It confuses the issue, and many people remain lost because of it. You don't have to prime the pump. You don't have to have a public move in order to receive what God has done for you. You just have to believe it, wherever you are and wherever you sit. The theatrics is good for the crew and the preacher and the dumb Christians who are impressed by that sort of thing, but it is meaningless to God, and it is a hindrance to the Lord's work.

You don't need a special technique of presentation either. Some of you are hung up that every time you get a chance to give the gospel now, you want to reach in your pocket and pull out the Four Spiritual Laws book. You open the thing and say, "I want to read to you. Number one, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." You don't know how to witness if you don't have a Four Spiritual Laws book. If somebody came up and needed to know about going to heaven and you didn't have the book, you'd say, "Just a minute. I want to run home get my little book." You don't need a technique. If you want to use that technique and you think that's helpful, well and good. But you focus on the issue of man's sin and God's peace that is offered, and you do it in your own way. You may not have the chance to have this joker read through these books with you. You better learn.

I had a very startling experience one time when we used to camp in Tennessee. We were going to this camp. It was early morning. We were driving along with the bus, and we just came on an accident. There was a man who had been drinking, and a girl with him. The roads were those old roads (not these nice highways we have now). You can't imagine how long it would take us to make this trip. This man had driven and hit right into the abutment of a bridge. He was sprawled out there on the hood--shattered. She was trapped with a broken leg in the front seat. We were the first on the scene. So, we sent the car back for an ambulance. I had a chance to talk to the lady. She kept passing out. I thought one time she had died. I thought, "Now, if she dies here, where is her soul going to be." So, I talked to her about the Lord. And my mind had to spin: "She might die on me in the next few minutes. What can I say to her?"

You can you can bet your boots that I didn't reach in my pocket and fumble around for my Four Spiritual Laws to read to her. You can bet that I went right to the crux of the issue like you would on a battlefield for a soldier who was dying on you, and he had his chance to make a decision. Do you know what information to give? Do you know how to get it across and how to present it, in your own way instead of some ridiculous stereotype that you think you have to use or that you think God particularly blesses?

There's no magical type of presentation. You don't have to know what cults believe in order to speak to somebody who's in a cult. You don't have to be in the profession. Plumbers do not testify better to other plumbers. And businessmen don't get to know the Lord better through other businessmen, or their organizations. That's a bunch of baloney, and you want to forget it. You are as capable of witnessing to anybody on the face of the earth as anyone else is, once you know the gospel.

When you have the motivation of the shoes of the gospel of peace, you know where you're going. You know what your destiny is going to be. You know where this person is going to be, and you're going to be ready for combat. With the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, you'll be ready to move out. And God will bless your testimony. Your work of evangelism will be received and will be prospered, and souls will meet you someday in heaven because you, in your own way, relative to your own personality, understood enough about how to get to heaven to make it clear to a person, perhaps even under the conditions of a few moments of life left.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

[**Back to the Advanced Bible Doctrine (Philippians) index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/philippiansdanish.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)