



#7 In the Battlefront Series

1

ADVANCE

Forest Park Church

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By Jason Corder

Eph. 6:10-17

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

When Paul talks about “feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace,” he is picturing the footwear of a Roman soldier.

- They typically wore a half-boot with the toes uncovered and spikes coming out of the soles.
- The boots allowed “the soldier to be ready to march, climb, fight, or do whatever else is necessary.
- ” The spikes specifically helped when hiking or on slippery surfaces.

Without the right shoes, the soldier’s feet were prone to blisters, cuts, and other problems which put him at a disadvantage in battle.

- Shoes were very important—without them, he wasn’t ready to fight.

Similarly, there is appropriate footwear for believers to wear in spiritual battles. It is the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

3 I. Footwear of Peace.

15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

4 A: At Peace with the Commander

5 **Romans 5:1**

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is important because the enemy always aims to separate believers from God.

- God gives believers the strength to put on God’s armor and the power to conquer the devil.
- Therefore, satan always seeks to separate Christians from the source of all that is good.
- Sometimes he uses lies to foster anger at God.
- He often begins by cultivating a wrong view of God.
- Believers start to believe that God doesn’t love them or want what’s best for them—that he just doesn’t care.
- Satan creates a caricature of God—a God of wrath but not a God of love, a God of judgment but not a God of mercy.

However, God is all of these.....

6 **Ephesians 2:14-16**

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Christ died to bridge the chasm between us and God.

- He paid the penalty for our sins and gave us his righteousness so that we could know God and come into his presence.

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Christ died so we could come near God and be known by God.

Christ always worked to correct his followers thinking about God.

Luke 11:13,

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Are you at peace with God?

7

B: At Peace with ourselves.

Not only has God given each of us peace with himself, but we also have the peace of God.

8

John 14:27,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

This peace Christ had while asleep in the boat during the storm,

- the peace that enabled him to go to the cross,
- he has given to us.
- **It is not God’s will for us to live in anxiety, fear, and worry.**

“Do not be afraid,” “Do not worry,” and “Be anxious for nothing” ([Phil 4:6](#))

If you are worried, anxious, and fearful, you have the wrong footwear for this battle.

- Our enemy is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).
- The lion roars to incite fear in his prey.

Some believers are fearful about

- Their future
- What others think or say.
- Others are afraid of failure.
- These fears undermine the footing of Christians—our readiness for battle comes from God’s peace.

Colossians 3:15

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

Paul also refers to the peace of Christ as clothing to be worn

As believers, we must let God’s peace rule in our hearts
not fear of failure,
losing our jobs,
or rejection.

Satan wants to lead us as slaves through fear, but God guides us as children through his peace

Do you have peace in your heart? Or are you tormented by fear?

9 C: Ready to Advance.

Isaiah 52:7

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

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!’”

Sharing the gospel with others is each person's assignment.

11

II Corinthians 5:18-20

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

In hand to hand combat, if one side is only playing defense, they will eventually be defeated.

- They must also attack.
- Our battle as believers is not just defensive.
- We are called to advance the kingdom of God by spreading the gospel everywhere in the name of Jesus.

Are we spreading the gospel? Is that your purpose at school, work, and home, and with family and friends?

I Peter 3:15

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

I think this also shows us how Satan attacks. He wants to attack our zeal for the gospel.

- He wants to quiet us.
- If we have lost our passion, then we no longer are wearing the footwear of peace.

12

D: At Peace with others.

This is one of the major themes of Ephesians.

Paul teaches the mystery of the gospel that God makes the Jew and Gentile one in Christ.

Ephesians 2:12-14

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

Interpersonal squabbles were a major issue for the early church.

- In [Acts 6](#), the Jews allegedly neglected the Greek widows in the daily distribution while providing for the Hebrew widows.

Surely disunity is one of the major weapons the enemy uses against our churches.

Sometimes he brings disunity through racism.

Sometimes he uses doctrine.

What God means to equip and strengthen us, the enemy uses to bring division and discord.

Most times, he just uses pride.

Pride says, "My way is the only way, and it can't be done any other way."

Churches divide over

- Changing the color of the carpet,
- The music,
- The flow of worship services

The root of this is pride—"my way is the right way."

Are we living in peace with those around you?

Rom 12:18

As much as depends on you, live at peace with all men

1. Are you wearing the right footwear for our spiritual war?

2. Are you recognizing our peace with God?
3. Are you being filled with the peace of God in your circumstances?
4. Are you sharing the gospel—always prepared to give a defense of the hope that is in you?
5. Are you living at peace with all men, as much as depends on you?

13 II. The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

The Greek word *thureos*, translated “shield,” referred to a large shield about two and half feet wide and four and a half feet high.

- It was designed to protect the entire body of a soldier.
- The shield was like a door—made of solid wood and covered with metal or leather.
- It was often dipped in water to extinguish the fiery arrows of the enemy.

Armies often wrapped pieces of cloth around arrows, soaked them in pitch, set them on fire, and then shot them at the enemy. Upon contact an arrow would often “spatter burning bits for several feet, igniting anything flammable it touched.”

Our enemy also shoots arrows. He shoots the arrows of:

- criticism,
- fear,
- covetousness,
- anger,
- depression,
- doubt,
- lust,
- and every other temptation.

In order to stand firm, we must take up the shield of faith.

14 A. Gods Faithfulness Shields us.

When Abram was struggling with fear, God said to him,

15 **Gen 15:1**

“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

Putting on the shield of faith means running to God

- When life is difficult,
- When life is good,
- When life is mundane.

Without the shield of faith we run to everything else before God.

- They run to substances
- They will run to coffee,
- To cigarettes,
- To relationships,
- To pity parties.

Believers learn to trust God by knowing his character.

The less we know God and his character, the more prone we'll be to believe Satan's lies and stumble.

- God is perfect, all-knowing, all-present, and all-powerful.
- He loves us, cares for us, and wants the best for us. He is sovereign and in control of all events—nothing happens apart from his watchful eye.
- If we don't understand this, we will be prone to anxiety, fear, and anger. God works all things according to the purpose of his will (Eph 1:11).

Believers learn to trust God by knowing his promises.

God has given us many promises to help us stand in spiritual warfare.

16

II Peter 1:3-4

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

When we feel like giving up, we hold remember:

Isaiah 40:31

Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

The longer we walk with God, the more we will trust him.

- As we watch God part our Red Seas,
- defeat our Goliaths,
- close the mouths of lions,
- and use the evil intentions and actions of others for good, it enables us to trust him more.

17

B: Our faith builds others faith.

- In ancient times, the edges of this shield were “so constructed that an entire line of soldiers could interlock shields and march into the enemy like a solid wall. This suggests that we Christians are not in the battle alone.
- The enemy attacks from every direction, and we need one another to stand firm.

The church is not perfect, God is.

However, it is the means through which God chooses to impart his grace. He works through an imperfect body. If we don't avail ourselves of the body's resources, we leave ourselves more vulnerable to the devil's attacks.

For this reason, Satan works overtime to pull people away from the church by accusing and condemning it.

- Yes, the church is full of sinners; in fact, it is full of both weeds and wheat Matt 13:24-30.
- However, every army is full of people with flaws, but without trust in one another, no army can stand.
- Therefore, in order to put on the shield of faith, we must depend upon the body of Christ—just like Roman soldiers depended on one another.
- Are you depending on the body of Christ? Are you confessing your sins to one another and praying for one another (James 5:16)? Are you speaking the truth in love to one another (Eph 4:15)?

18 C: Walking the Walk.

In ancient Roman armies, the people holding the thureos—the large shields—were always at the front of the army.

- They were the front line.
- When they lifted their shields, they protected those behind them.
- This also allowed the archers to shoot arrows while under their protection.

Therefore, to put on the shield of faith means to live a life of faith—serving God.

- It means stepping out of our comfort zone to serve in a ministry.
- It means using our gifts to serve the church.

As we stand firm against these attacks with the shield of faith, we protect others and help them grow as they benefit from our faith.

To never get involved, use our spiritual gifts, or build others up means to not use the shield of faith.

- Those not serving, not involved, often aren't the focus of the enemy.
- Why waste resources on somebody who's not fighting?

Conclusion:

Are you daily taking up the shield of faith? Are you living a life of faith or a life of fear? Are you depending on the body of Christ, or are you independent? Are you on the front line or the sidelines? If we are going to stand firm, we must take up the shield of faith.

How can we stand firm in spiritual warfare?

1. Believers Stand Firm by Putting on the Footwear of Peace

- As they appropriate the believers' peace with God
- As they appropriate the peace of God
- As they share the gospel with others
- As they walk in peace with others

'2. Believers Stand Firm by Taking up the Shield of Faith

- As they trust in God's person
- As they depend on the body of Christ
- As they pursue and serve God