

The Defense of Peace

Ephesians 6:15

Please turn with me to the book of Ephesians – we will be looking specifically at verse 15 this morning and talk about the shoes of peace. We have up to this point been looking at the armor of God. We all know that we have an enemy that would like nothing more than to destroy us, our faith, our confidence and our eternity. Life is difficult enough being a sinful human being, living in an prideful and self-centered world, experiencing the results of sin and decay. Add to that the attacks of Satan – We all agree that life is a struggle.

Paul builds for the church in Ephesus a systematic approach of defense and then a plan of attack. We have looked at the first two components of our defense – Truth and Righteousness. As I have stated in a couple of weeks ago, that the armor of God is given in a specific order. First we have the realization of reality (The truth of God and the universe) which we find in the words of Jesus Christ in **John 14:6**:

6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Once we accept Jesus as our Savior there is an awakening that takes place within our souls that helps us to see life as it really is, and our need for help. Second, we looked at the righteousness of God. Until we see that we need help and that the only way to get it is through Jesus, we will continue to think that righteousness is a state that can be fully obtained and that life is nothing more than a struggle to become perfect. The good news is that’s not the case. Righteousness is possessed by Jesus Christ, yet imputed or transferred or attached to us. We are righteous not by works of attempts but through belief and faith alone. **Romans 1:17** tells us:

17 “This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

Once we have come to understand the truth, once we understand that being righteous is impossible without the attached righteousness of Jesus Christ and all that he asks is to live our lives as slaves to do the right thing and to love others, it is only then that we find a sense of peace. The truth leads to Jesus’ righteousness, which is given or attached to us, so that we can live in peace. Now, read with me **Ephesians 6:13-15**:

*13 Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.
14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.*

Have you ever thought about how important shoes are? You get a good pair and it seems like you can walk on them forever. But put a pair of shoes that don't fit or aren't that good in quality and it doesn't take long for you to grow tired, sore, and want nothing more than to get off of your feet and rest.

Has anyone here ever hurt your foot? You don't realize how much you take for granted a well functioning foot. One small injury and it seems like the rest of your day is bothered on in upheaval. Shoes are important in our daily walk and in our walking to present the Good News to others.

We know that during the time that this passage of scripture was written that the boots of the Roman soldier was designed to provide maximum stability and flexibility for marching, while at the same time protection so that they could do battle and now have to worry about what they were about to step on.

What is it that allows us to stand strong and confident, what is it that allows us to move forward and spread the Good News of Jesus? It is peace. **Peace not only provides us protection but also gives us confidence to move forward in our walk with God.**

What does it mean to have peace as a believer in Jesus Christ:

1. We Have Peace with God

Colossians 1:21-22 tells us:

21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

We were God's enemies who are now **reconciled (original Greek: to exchange, to be one who is returned or received back into favor)**. Doesn't that encourage you this morning? That no matter what you do, whatever your flaws, and imperfect you know you are – that God exchanges our name from that of enemies to allies.

There's a story about Alexander III, the Tsar of Russia from 1881-1894. His rule was marked by repression and control, and in particular by persecution of Jews. His wife, Maria Fedorovna, provided a stark contrast, being known for her generosity to those in need. On one occasion her husband had signed an order consigning a prisoner to life in exile. It read simply "Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia." Maria changed that prisoner's life by moving the comma in her husband's order. She altered it to "Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia." In Christ God has changed the comma that stood against us. From "Pardon impossible, send to Siberia" comes the good news of salvation: "Pardon, impossible to send to Siberia."

Romans 5:1 tells us:

1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Again, peace is given to us not based on what we have done or can do, but based simply of what Jesus has done for us. That is why other religions that speak about keeping rules and regulations in order to become acceptable to their god, these don't make sense. As a human being I will never reach the point of making myself right. Instead of living in peace and confidence they live in fear and uncertainty.

And now that we are allies with God, now that God is on side, what do we have to fear? In the words of David in **Psalm 27:1**:

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life-- of whom shall I be afraid?

Paul put it this way in **2 Thessalonians 3:16**:

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.

As we walk through our day, we have the God of peace, who has made peace between us and himself, walking with us into every circumstance, every conflict, every unforeseeable scenario. We walks with us as our ally and friend. He walks with us through life, and he walks with us as we are being attacked by Satan himself. Look at **Romans 16:20**:

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Not only do we have peace with God, but he is now our ally who will fight for us and give us his power and strength to make it through whatever comes our way. **Romans 15:13**:

13 I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to have peace as a believer in Christ?

2. We Help Others Find Peace.

The good news is that we have peace with God and yet there are still others who are still in need of it. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**:

18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

We have a message of peace to tell others. It's not about rules, it's not about being good enough, it's not about getting your life in order first, it's not what people think it is. Their view of the Good News which the church has preached is only an issue of conversion and compliance. That's not what it is at all!

The Good News is about God reaching down to mankind and making a way so that men can once again live at peace with God. It is a message worth living and dieing for. It is message that, somewhere in this world people are needing to hear. And when they understand what Jesus has done for them, they will welcome it with open arms and will thank God that you were willing to say something. Paul wrote in **Romans 10:13-15**:

13 For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"*

There is no higher calling in life than to share this message of peace. You may feel out of place, lacking in the right words to speak, fearful of rejection and ridicule – but none of these outweigh man's need for peace with God. And when people do accept this Good News, they will say "how beautiful are the feet of those messengers who brought us this peace." Is that what you want people to say about you? Is that worth living your life for? If it is then let's walk together, putting on the sandals of peace and march against our enemy who want nothing more than for people to live as an enemy against Christ.

Finally, this morning, to have peace as a believer in Christ means:

3. We Have Peace In The Future.

In **Romans 5:2** Paul writes:

2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

We find a good example of this in the life of Horatio Spafford. He was a song writer who penned the words of a famous Hymn. Spafford's son had recently died. His real estate investments had been obliterated in the Chicago Fire of 1871. His daughters, Bessie,

Annie, Maggie, and Tanetta had drowned in the Atlantic Ocean after their ship had been broadsided by another English vessel. He wrote the words of "It is well with my soul". He writes:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot thou hast taught me to say, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, let this blest assurance
control, that Christ has regarded my helpless estate, and has shed his own blood
for my soul.

This was not a man who was living in a make believe world, but a man who had
experienced the peace that comes from God. He continues to write:

My sin – O the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole, is
nailed to the cross and I bear it no more; Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, O my
soul!

And even though life on earth seemed unbearable, Horatio fixes his thoughts on the
future. Fitted with the good news of peace he finishes his song with the following words:

O Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a
scroll, the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, 'Even so' – it is well
with my soul.

Church, today we have peace. Peace with God, Peace to Proclaim, and Hope of Peace.
What makes it possible for you to walk each and everyday without the fear of what
comes your way, without the fear of God, without the fear of the future? It is peace.

Peace makes it possible for us to walk with confidence and to march against our enemy
and advance God's Kingdom and his Good News. Learn God's truth, embrace God's
righteousness, and let God's peace strengthen you to stand strong and move forward.
Let's pray.