

Shoes of Gospel Readiness (Eph 6:15)

The enemy wants us unstable, divided, and silent, but Christ gives us firm footing in the gospel so we can stand in peace, protect peace, and proclaim peace.

1. **Christ has provided peace, so plant your feet in it. (The enemy wants us unstable in our faith):** Before we can protect or proclaim peace, we must first receive and stand in peace with God through Jesus Christ.
 - a. Soldiers Need Stability –
 - i. The enemy wants you unstable - He wants Christians to fight against him without the grounding of our salvation.
 - Some of you struggle with stability in your faith because you are wondering if God is still holding your sins over your head.
 - ii. The shoes a Roman soldier wore were more like studded half boots, than simple sandals. What soldiers needed in a battle was the good grip provided by nails driven through the sole, so that the front lines were not sent reeling by an enemy charge.
 - b. Stand firm in the gospel of peace – Wearing the shoes of the gospel of peace provides sure footing as we wage war with the enemy.
 - i. The gospel of peace is the announcement that sinners who were once enemies of God have been reconciled to God through the blood of Christ and now have peace with God. (Rom 5, 2 Cor 5.)
 - Not temporary peace. Not probationary peace as if God has you on a trial run. Not peace until your next failure. **Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ that lasts forever.**
 - ii. **Do you know peace?** Peace with God has been made for you through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Believe upon Him today. Experience the lasting peace with God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

When Christ makes peace between sinners and God, He also creates peace between a people (Church) who must learn to live at peace with one another. The same cross that reconciles us to God also reconciles us to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. **Christ has purchased peace, so protect it. (The enemy wants us divided). (Ephesians 2:14–16; Romans 12:18.)**
 - a. The enemy attacks peace in the church because Christ purchased peace.
 - i. Satan loves division, suspicion, bitterness, resentment, gossip, unforgiveness, and factions. These things belong to his work, not Christ's. They erode peace. The keep the church from glorifying God.
 - b. Peace with one another – Ephesians 2 says Christ **is our peace**, Christ **has broken down the dividing wall**, and Christ **has created one new man**.
 - i. Christ purchased and united a people to Himself through His sacrifice. The Church is made up of all types of people from all over the world with all sorts of back-stories, personalities, and cultures. The church is beautiful. But the enemy's lies and our own sinfulness often turns the beauty of diversity into opportunity for division. The church is made up of people

we would not naturally choose, prefer, or even easily understand. Readiness, therefore, becomes an important part of the instruction Paul gives as we are called to be ready peacemakers and peacekeepers in our relationships with one another.

- ii. Division in the church is not a small relational problem. It is a contradiction of what Christ died to create. It speaks a different word than the message of Christ.
 - Are you the type of person who stirs up strife or puts out the fire of division? Are you divisive or unifying? The adversary wants Christians to aim their weapons at each other. But Paul says our struggle is not against flesh and blood.
- c. Protect peace by:
 - i. Refusing needless division. Protecting gospel peace is refusing to let the enemy turn a brother or sister into your battlefield. Who are you viewing as an enemy? Are you protecting peace or recruiting people to your frustration?
 - ii. Not allowing your preferences to become a priority. When you don't like something, do you stop to consider if this is simply a difference in preferences, or if it is an issue that should be a priority? We have a statement of faith that outlines our theological priorities and a constitution that outlines our practicing priorities. Truth and holiness must certainly be defended, but many church conflicts are not about truth or holiness; they are about preferences that have been promoted into priorities. Wisdom requires us to know the difference between a priority issue, and a preference issue. This is where wisdom meets the Christian who desires to keep the peace Christ has purchased.
 - iii. Not entertaining people's attempts to recruit you toward their opinions. or not allowing negative conversations to continue that are happening without the person being mentioned.

Peace is not meant to stop inside the church. The church is not a museum of reconciled people. We are an embassy of reconciliation. Christ has made peace, Christ has formed a people of peace, and now Christ sends us to announce peace as His ambassadors.

3. Christ has published peace, so proclaim it. (The enemy wants us silent).

- a. Satan declares war and wants to keep us silent.
 - i. Some of us are silent because we do not feel prepared. Some of us are silent because we have forgotten that the gospel is good news. Some of us are silent because politics, arguments, and culture war have trained us to speak loudly about everything except Christ. Some of us are silent because we are afraid of rejection. No matter how a Christian becomes silent, the enemy loves it.
- b. Readiness and Preparation - Earlier we saw that the soldier's shoes gave him stability to stand. Those same shoes also gave him mobility to move. We stand firm in the peace Christ provides, and we move forward with the peace Christ published. Roman soldier's studded half boots enabled them to not only plant their feet in the ground in order to not be moved, but it also helped them travel great distances. They covered a lot of ground in a short amount of time, pursuing the enemy into every nook and cranny. This is one of the things that set Roman soldiers apart. They could cover ground much faster than other armies and they were able to get into more difficult places.

- c. Beautiful Feet – In Romans 10:15, Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:7 about the necessity of the office of preaching: ‘And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation.”’
- i. **Illustration:** That image of beautiful feet can be traced back to the communications system of the ancient world. ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’
 - ii. Our Going –We have been given the shoes of the gospel of peace to cover lots of ground with the gospel. Jesus has commanded us to take the gospel to friends, neighbors, coworkers and even faraway places, even to the places that are hard to get to.
 - Christians are ambassadors of peace (2 Cor. 5:18–21). Christians are a sent people with the message of peace.
 - We go as ambassadors announcing terms of peace from the King: “Be reconciled to God.”
 - Who is the person God is calling you to share with this week? Write their name down. Pray, and ask God to give you an opportunity.

The enemy wants us unstable, divided, and silent. But Christ has given us firm footing in the gospel of peace.

Christ has made peace, so we must readily stand in it.

Christ has purchased peace, so we must readily protect it.

Christ offers peace, so we must readily proclaim it.