

Each Study we will begin by reading **Ephesians 6:10-13**.

- We are on a mission – “Be Strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” – The Ephesian letter has two halves. The first boasts of the amazing blessings and strength of Jesus, while the second challenges us to “walk in a manner worthy...” (**Eph. 4:1**). That means strength & resolve.
- Satan is unseen but active - “not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers...” This “not, but” construction notes that there will be flesh and blood decisions, but the real issue is the deceitful worker of death behind it, seeking to derail our faith and devour our souls.
- We need armor to survive – “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” We cannot defeat Satan and keep our souls from his grip without this armor, ALL of it, every piece, as each is in itself unique.

Review: “Gird your Loins with Truth”

- 1) This is about the Word of God – *Read, Study, Obey* (Ex – Exodus 28-30 – yes, even there!)
- 2) This is about Fact over Fiction – **Acts 26:24-26** – “Truth and Rationality” - Measure yourself!
- 3) This is about Putting on Christ – Is. 11:1-5 – He is full of grace and truth – emulate Him!

Review: “The Breastplate of Righteousness”

- 1) This is about the Word of God – It is about the Righteousness layered on us from the Word
 - a. His R. upon us – Grace / His R. in us – Faith / His R. through us – Good Works!
- 2) This is about Right and Wrong – **Ac. 10:35** – “do what is right” – boils down to daily choices.
- 3) This is about our Righteous King – **Is. 59:17** – He always chose God’s way. Inspirational!

“Shod your Feet with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace” – That’s a wordy one! 11 Words!

Let’s see if we can break this down a little bit and capture the essence of the phrase:

“Shod your Feet” – *This imagery has value as we’ll see in a bit, but really just another piece of the armor.*
 “with the Preparation” – So you don’t wear the Gospel here, but the preparation from it! “Readiness”
 “of the Gospel” – “By the Gospel” – The Gospel is the tool needed to forge the armor – Readiness”
 “of peace” – The whole gospel will help, but the Peace it provides is emphasized.

So, from bottom to top, let’s phrase it this way: ***“There is a peace that on the Gospel can provide, which prepares and equips us to move forward in our faith, standing strong against he devil!”***

“Okay, that sounds amazing. I want that and need that so badly to be more victorious!” – That is what I hope you are saying to yourself right now. Let’s dig in a little but to understand more and get it!

1) This is about the Word of God

- a. Oh, not this again. Yep, this again. Look at the two P words: “Preparation” and “Peace.” You can’t have the first without the second. The two go hand in hand in every strong Christian I have ever met. And when one falls, its because the other wasn’t there to catch it. But between them is THE GOSPEL. You can’t get one or the other without it.
- b. Since it’s the GOSPEL of PEACE and the PREPARATION of the GOSPEL!
- c. Let me let Paul explain a little further, but from another letter he wrote:
 - i. **Romans 1:1-4** – It’s kind of a big deal. Like, an ALTIME BIGGEST DEAL!
 - ii. **Romans 1:16-17** – It is Power, empowerment to all. The full scope of faith.
 - iii. **Romans 2:16** – It is the standard of all total and final judgment.
 - iv. **Romans 16:25-27** – It will establish you, lead to faith, through Jesus Christ.
- d. So yes, we read. We want to know it, seek to understand it, study it when God’s people are willing to gather. We see it as the bridge to bring God’s good news into our lives and make us stronger. So we travel it with buckets daily. They may not always get there with water, but they get a little cleaner, a little more useful, every single day.

2) This is about Good over Evil

- a. This needs explanation but it is simple enough in the text. Evil is amongst us. The devil is firing his arrows, affecting people, scheming to get us to do wrong. And when we choose to sin, we choose evil, the desires and will of the evil one.
- b. But we fight evil with GOOD. Not just something that is not evil, something GOOD. The Gospel means “*The Good News*.” In fact, this word can be used in a non-Bible sense of just news that is good! The Gospel is profitable, healthy, life invigorating news!
 - i. **Ephesians 1:13-14** – The Gospel is not just – news that is not evil that will eventually keep you from hell. NO! It is AMAZING NEWS!
 1. A sealed relationship with God by the power of the Holy Spirit
 2. People who now live for the eternal inheritance of God
 3. With a view, though sinners, of being redeemed into heaven with God.
 4. Living our true purpose: to the praise of His Glory!
 - ii. **Eph. 1:18-19** – I pray you see the Word for what it is: THE GREATEST NEWS!
- c. To add to the good of the Gospel, Paul emphasizes what it brings with it: PEACE
 - i. **Phil. 1:2; 4:6-7, 8-9** – I’m talking about something very, very good. A way to live without wearing the anxiety of the World. An outlet to share with God. A security that goes beyond worldly definition. And as we focus on them, (read, study, apply), the God of peace will be WITH YOU.
- d. Now then, we use the GOODNESS of the news, the invigorating, gracious, undeserved blessings and eternal promises, the GOOD, to dominate and defend against EVIL.
 - i. Illustration – I was a teen and had my first real chance to try drugs. I got off work late and went to my “friend” Ray’s house. He fired something up in a can and handed it to me. I put it down and left and never talked to him again. Why? ... My life was too good. My parents gave me a place to stay and washed the clothes and bought and prepared meals. I had cable TV! In that moment, my defense against Evil was the Goodness of what I had. I couldn’t live without it.
- e. I can see – “*don’t sin because you will go to hell.*” But that’s not really the defense is it? “*Don’t sin because you forfeit heaven, the good news, God, peace, purpose, this!*”

3) This is about Spreading the Good News

- a. In our passage, though it includes feet and the Gospel, I’m not immediately drawn to Evangelism as the point. This is about you, and me, getting our defenses prepped, and the good news covering us up and keeping us focused. But, you can’t deny OT Quotes!
- b. **Isaiah 52:1-2, 6-10** – So, this begins by backing our second point, we are clothed with and absolutely sustained by the blessings of God! But, it overflowed so much that they couldn’t keep it to themselves! ***Announce Peace! Bring Good News! Shout Joyfully!***
- c. Nothing defends us against the setbacks of sin and temptation, like the mission of sharing our faith and purpose with those around us. Sin would be like purposefully twisting an ankle during a race. I protect against that with footwear because I’m on a mission. That mission is Spreading the Good News!
- d. So, our best defense is a great offense. Be evangelistic to defend against sin!
 - i. ***Invite friends to church. Talk about what is great about your church.***
 - ii. ***Share you Bible read information with friends. Invite them to join along.***
 - iii. ***Give out CD or material to help people. Because you want to them to see true joy.***
- e. Why? Because it is right? Sure. To defend against the devil’s work? No doubt. But most of all, because we have the greatest Peace and Joy this life has to offer. Let’s share it!
- f. Parable of the Two Seas – Both nourished by the same flowing waters. One takes the good, mixes with it, and passes it along. The other takes but lets it settle and doesn’t pass it out to another. One lives vibrantly. The other is the “dead sea.” Take in the Gospel, enjoy it, and find ways to pass it along to the lives of another.

Conclusion – Are you prepared to walk out those doors and defend your soul against the foe? Are you ready to stand strong? God says you can be. But it starts with loving the word, rejoicing in the peace that Christ brings into your life, and passing that along with love and great joy in your heart. But hey, you can’t pass along what you don’t have. So if you need Jesus today – The Gospel of Peace is here.