

The Shoes and the Shield



Spiritual Warfare (Part 8)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we follow through our theme for this week, the defensive armor that God has provided for us in our spiritual warfare against Satan and his kingdom.

In Ephesians 6:13-17, Paul lists six items:

First, the girdle of truth;

Second, the breastplate of righteousness;

Third, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel;

Fourth, the shield of faith;

Fifth, the helmet of salvation;

Sixth, the sword of the Spirit.

So far, we have dealt with the girdle and the breastplate. Today we are going to study the next two items, the shoes and the shield.

Perhaps I should begin by giving you some kind of description of the kind of shoes that Roman legionaries usually wore. They were strong, heavy sandals with thongs to keep the feet in place and they usually also laced at least half-way up the calf with leather thongs. They were a very important part of the legionary's equipment because they enabled him to march long distances at speed. This gave him mobility. It made him available to his commander at the time and the place where he was needed in the battle. So I want you to think of shoes as providing mobility or availability to your commander, the Lord Jesus Christ. They make you mobile, they make you available.

This became very real to me in my own personal experience, as I mentioned before in these talks. For two years during World War II, I served with a hospital unit with the British Army in the deserts of North Africa. And there were times in that service while we were working with an armored division that we were very close to the enemy lines, sometimes at night. And in the desert it is not easy to know exactly where the enemy lines are because the whole war is very mobile. In

such situations, our commanding officer always gave orders that we were not to take our boots off at night. We were to sleep with our boots on. Of course, the reason is obvious. If there is a sudden emergency in the middle of the night, you are usually not at your best anyhow when you wake out of sound sleep, and if you don't have your boots on and it's dark and there is confusion all around you, you can spend several valuable minutes groping for your boots, trying to put them on, trying to lace them up. Whereas, if you have your boots on, you are instantly available. You see, the key is availability or mobility.

Now, this is true of the spiritual counterpart that Paul speaks about in our equipment as Christians. The shoes, or the sandals, are called the preparation of the gospel. In other words, it means being ready with something. I believe that as Christians, we are obligated to have an intelligent understanding of what the gospel is. Many Christians claim to be saved and born again but they can't give any intelligent account of how they got saved or how someone else can get saved. I believe preparation includes study of the Scripture, memorization of Scripture, ability to communicate intelligently the gospel message. That's preparation.

Then again, notice that Paul calls it "the gospel of peace." It's a gospel that produces peace of heart and mind in those who believe it and obey it.

Now, there is one thing very certain about peace. We can only transmit peace to others if we have peace ourselves, first. We cannot transmit something that we do not experience. We can talk about it, we can theorize, but we cannot transmit it.

There is a very significant passage in Matthew 10:12-13, where Jesus was giving instructions to the first disciples when He sent them out for the first time to preach the gospel for themselves. This is part of the instruction that He gave them:

> "As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you." (NIV)

Notice that significant phrase, "when you go into a home, if it is deserving, let your peace rest on it." Impart your peace to it. Let me ask you frankly, if you go into a home, do you have peace to impart? You cannot impart something that you are not enjoying yourself.

Let me give you a little example of how this might work. You are a lady out in a supermarket, doing your grocery shopping. And perhaps just in front of you or just behind you in the line for the check-out there is a lady who is obviously on the verge of a nervous breakdown. She's nervous, she can't handle herself, she's all jittery, and God directs you to help her. What are you going to do? Are you going to say, "Come to church on Sunday morning?" That won't meet her need. If you had to say that, you wouldn't have your shoes on. Having your shoes on means you are ready to do something right then and there when God directs you. What are you going to have to do? First of all, you've got to have peace. You've got to let her feel that you've got something that she hasn't got and desperately needs. People can feel peace in other people. I've seen that many times.

Secondly, when she reaches out for that peace, you've got to be able to tell her in simple, non-religious language just how she can find peace. You've got to be able to communicate the gospel to her. So that's the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace.

The next item that we are going to speak about is the shield of faith. In the Greek of the New Testament, there are two different words for "shield," two different kinds of shields. One is a small, circular shield, shaped more or less like a large, round wicker basket, a flat basket. The other one is taken from the word for a door because it is shaped somewhat like a door. It is a long rectangular shield. That is the kind of shield that Paul speaks of when he says "the shield of faith." A properly trained Roman legionary could so use that shield of faith that when he held it in front of him, no part of his body could be reached by the missiles of the enemy. It protected him completely. That is the door-shaped shield that protects the whole person. That's the kind of faith that Paul is speaking about when he refers to it as a shield.

You see, when we go out against Satan, if we begin to cause him any trouble, you can be sure he will counterattack. First and foremost, he may counterattack us, ourselves. So we need to have a shield that covers us: our minds, our hearts, our bodies, our finances. He will attack any area he can reach. And if he can't attack us, he'll attack those closest to us. If you are a married man and a minister, the first thing that Satan will attack is your wife. It's almost to be guaranteed. That is one of the ways he'll get back at you. You have to have a shield big enough to protect everything for which God has made you responsible. Your own person, your family, and everything that God has committed to you.

I learned this lesson in a very vivid way once and I will try to relate it to you briefly.

I was ministering to a woman who had a demon of suicide. At a certain point, she received a very definite, dramatic deliverance. She knew she was free. So I praised God. The

next day she came back to see me and she related this remarkable incident. She said that just about the time she received her deliverance, her husband was driving along the highway in his open pick-up truck and their German Shepherd dog was standing, as the dog always loved to do, in the back of the truck. For no reason, while the truck was traveling at high speed, the shepherd dog suddenly jumped out and was instantly killed.

The moment she told me that, I understood that something had happened. I understood that that demon of suicide which had left the woman had gone into the dog. You see, Satan attacked the nearest thing he could reach and I learned a lesson that I trust I will never have to learn again. Whenever I minister deliverance to people, I always claim the protection of faith and of the blood of Jesus over everything that is connected with them. That kind of thing has never happened to me again. But there was how I learned the importance of the shield of faith, that great, door-shaped shield that protects everything God has committed to us.

You see, faith is mentioned twice in this list of the armor. The breastplate is faith and love, and the shield is the shield of faith. But I believe faith has to be understood slightly differently. The breastplate is faith for our own personal righteousness. But the shield is faith for protection and provision for ourselves and all whom God has committed to us. It is the thing that covers everything.

I learned this is a vivid way also at the beginning of this radio ministry. When I got launched into this radio ministry, it was remarkable how many things simultaneously went wrong in the office and in the production. Equipment that should have functioned perfectly suddenly ceased to function. Personnel became sick, messages went astray. A kind of confusion broke loose in our usually well-ordered set-up. And then I realized I had to stretch out the shield of faith. Satan was counterattacking. He couldn't reach me personally, so he attacked something that I depended upon, those who supported my ministry. But I held out the shield of faith, I rebuked that power of confusion, and peace and order were restored. So, once again I learned a lesson. We have to hold out that shield of faith for full protection and provision.

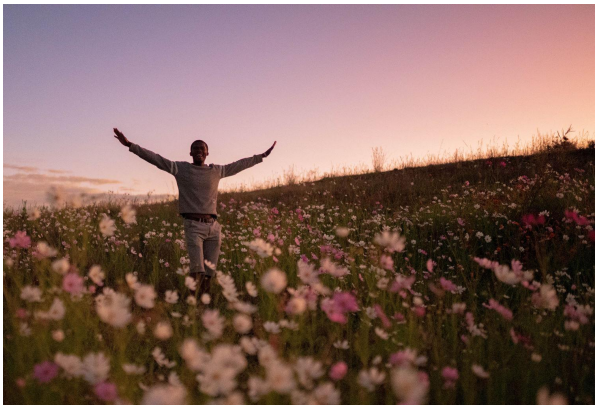
Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I will be dealing with the fifth item of equipment, the helmet of salvation. I will be sharing some precious truths concerning this that I learned from some of my own conflicts.

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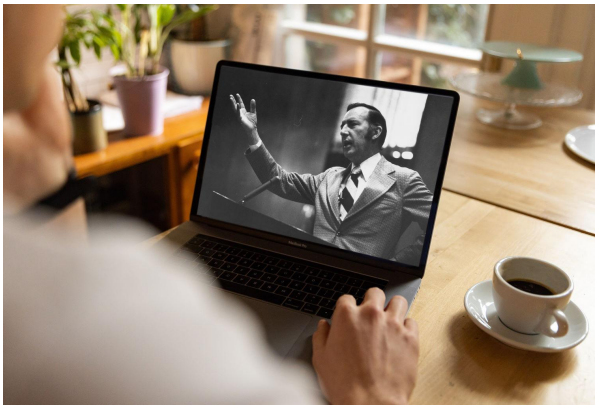
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