

# Ephesians 6:10-18

Sunday 9/20/2009

SEC: Introduction: The Feet of the Preacher

In Romans 10 again, we will move on into some other places in the Bible that will put together our message this morning. Remember last week we looked at Romans 10, particularly verses 14 and 15, and we emphasized the last part of verse 15. I want to read that portion for you again, and then we will look at it here as we move on.

*Romans 10:14-15*

*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

Last time, we talked about your feet and what they represent in the Bible. I told you that in a doctrinal context, wherever you find the feet, it is always a picture, in particular, of Jesus' feet in reference to the Second Coming of Christ. I told you how that at the Second Coming, in the book of Zechariah and many other places in the Bible, when He steps off that horse at the Mount of Olives, His feet touch the ground. The mountain cleaves asunder, and then He walks in on His feet. He walks through the Eastern Gate and sits down on the throne, becoming King of Kings and Lord of Lords. From that point on, His feet always represent His reign, Him having His feet on the ground of this earth and running things from that aspect.

From an inspirational aspect, it is a picture of your walk with God and how to carry the gospel of peace, as the Bible talks about in Romans 10:15. I told you the two aspects of your feet in a practical sense. We looked at it. I talked about the first last week: your feet at the time of salvation. We went back to Exodus 12, and I showed you the great concept of the gospel according to Exodus. It shows you four things in Exodus 12 that really deal with where your feet are at when you get saved. The Bible talks about eating it in haste. We talked about the urgency of the ministry, your loins girt, your staff in your hand, and the shoes on your feet. I showed you that this first emphasis about your feet is a picture of the day you got saved.

The day you got saved, you get the Holy Spirit of God, but you also get an attitude along with that. That attitude ought to be that you are going to do with your life now what God wants you to do. Years and years ago, even in my early life, when a man and a woman got saved, they understood when they got up off their knees that their life now needed to change. That does not mean that they did not struggle with things. It did not mean that they did not have to deal with some issues in their life. We all have issues. But what it meant was that their attitude was now firmly fixed that in spite of the issues they had to work through, they went in a positive direction to go for the Lord Jesus Christ and to go for God.

I find it interesting that God wants you to go. You cannot spell "God" without "go". We talked about the gospel of peace; you cannot spell "gospel" without "go". God wants you to go and do something for Him after you are saved. Most of the time, when you first get saved, you are not

ready to actually go. This first aspect of your feet has to do with your attitude, getting your mind set that you are going to do something for God. Your direction has now been changed. That is repentance. You were going one way for the world; now you are going another way for God. But the key word is to go and do something for the Lord.

## I. Preparation for Ministry: Travail and Education

Today, we are going to look at the second aspect of your feet. This one deals with after you are saved. This one deals with you and I preparing yourself for the work of God. I told you a couple of times, I made reference to it, that in Galatians 4:19, Paul talks about travailing a second time. If you are ever going to be in ministry, or you are going to work with people, or you are going to deal with people, you are going to understand that aspect of true travail. Travail is something that maybe is a burden. Travail is something that you struggle, that you want for somebody else that maybe they do not want.

Paul talks to the church in Galatia about the fact that he first travailing for them to be saved. He had a burden for them to find Christ as their own personal Savior, and they did. Then he travails for them that they do not stay baby Christians. His travail is that they begin to grow and become everything that God wants them to be. Of course, that is the travail of ministry. We travail for people to get saved. We pray for them, ask God to put the things in their life, good things, bad things, that bring them to Christ. Then after they get saved, we travail that they grow. I have talked to people all week long that are working with people that are younger Christians. We converse back and forth to keep progress and keep everything on track and see where everything is at. Over and over again, I see in many of you folks that travail, that you want that person to make it. You want them to get the Bible.

I have seen you work in marital situations where a couple was severely struggling. We know the answers, and we know how easy it is to fix any problem in life. But the real issue is, do you want to fix the problems in life? We travail over things like that. That is a good thing, but it is also part of the ministry. I have come to the conclusion about some things, and I have told you many, many times: my calling in life, even more so than being a pastor, my call in life from God, my job from God for me, is to take young men and young ladies and train them in the Bible. But not just train them in the Bible, get them to the point where they get educated in the aspect of ministry.

There is a difference between training and educating. There really is. Most people do not stop and think about those things. I am the kind of guy that will analyze something and look at all the pieces of it so I can better understand how to do it. I can train you in the Bible. I can teach you Bible concepts. I can give you the practical application of things. I can train you in the principles. I can teach you the concepts. But I do not have the ability to educate you. Education is taking the training that I give you and then by using it in ministry itself, letting the principles begin to work in scenarios with people's lives that you begin to see and understand how those principles work.

The ministry is in two aspects: a teaching aspect and a training aspect. When we meet on Thursday night, we meet in our Bible Basics class. Everything that we do, I am having you do

this thesis paper that you are doing. I am having you do this in such great detail because I want to see if my training for you has paid off, that you have the ability to write it out in a logical format that shows me that you grasp the material. You could do me the best thesis paper in the world. You really could. You could do everything in there. I have watched some of you, the things that you showed me already, and you have great material. You are really on track. But that does not mean that on a one-on-one situation, you can teach it. You get educated by taking that material, sitting down with somebody else, and then laying out the Bible. You will find that the Bible, as you teach it, has a million keys that you will open up in people's lives.

How many times have you started to disciple somebody? Lesson One in discipleship is the lesson of what really happened today. Remember that lesson? How many times have some of you started to disciple some brand new Christian with Lesson One, and you never even got into Lesson One because they wanted to talk about all the other problems in their world? You know why that is? Because the Bible opens up things like that. You have to be prepared for that. You do not ever go into a discipleship thinking, "I am going to teach Lesson One." Probably very rarely, first time out of the shoot, will you ever teach Lesson One. You are going to hear about their grandmother, their dog, their first, second, and third wife. You are going to hear everything in the world that went on in their life. That is what it is designed to do. But I cannot teach you that. I can train you in biblical principles, but your education comes when you sit down with somebody.

You take a doctor, somebody that wants to be a doctor. I think the doctors that go to medical school, they are incredible. I could never do it. And the discipline they must have to go through how many years of medical training. But they can pass number one in their class, and they can have everything in anatomy down and everything in all the classes they have to go through. But they are not a real certified doctor until all by themselves, they open up that first patient with an operation and have to do it, not by looking at pictures in a book. That is when all the training now becomes part of their education process. When you learn the basic principles of the Bible, using those basic principles then makes you better.

You can take driver's training. You have all been behind people in driver's training. You have got the little life specs, "Stay 600 feet behind because we have got a driver trainer here." You can go driver's training and you can do all of the things and go through all the books, watch all the videos, see all the beautiful wrecks, learn all the things, drive around to do all that you had to do. But you are not really a driver until you are by yourself in that car. You put the key in, you put it in gear, and you drive off by yourself. You could be a pilot, go to flight school, and you get a flight instructor, and he takes you everywhere and shows you everything. You have ground school, then you have flight training. But you are really not a pilot until you get in that plane all by yourself. To me, that would be the most frightening thing in the world. I do not care how good I was trained to think that I am going to go up in an airplane now where I am going to be 2,000 feet in the air with no ladder, and if something happens, I have nobody there to tell me what to do. In other words, you can have all the training in the world, folks, but until you start to use the training you have, that is when you begin to get your education.

I have seen it in people's lives all my life. I see it in this church. Many of you who have come to the point where you have a deeper, across-the-board understanding of principles in the Bible, you all get the same training. I do not teach two different Bible studies every Thursday night and have one set over here and one set over here. Everybody gets the same training. You get the same messages on Sunday morning. You come over here one-on-one, you get the same stuff then. The training is all the same. What makes the difference between somebody who develops himself and educates himself in how to deal with people versus somebody who still just stumbles around and does not know how to do it? The difference is you got educated. You took what you were trained and then you educated yourself by using it. It is just the way that it works.

The core of this church, as far as I am concerned, as long as I am pastor, the core of this church is and always will be the Bible and the Bible teaching and the Bible preaching ministry. I need people who can disciple people. I am always looking for people who have the ability to teach the Bible. That is why I am doing what I am doing. I gave you the first time we had the Bible basics. I gave you a test, and that test was basically fill in the blank, so to speak. The second one was a little more creative, and you had to come up and fill in the charts. This one now is totally radically different. This one brings it about completely where now you have to show me that you understand the material. You have a grasp of it. Why? Because I want to see who spends the time. I hear stories about many of you, how you agonize over the test, how you worry about this and you worry about that. I kind of chuckle a little bit because I like that. Then you have the others that the class is Saturday morning, and they will start Friday night to try to put the thing together. That is just the way people are. I am looking for those who agonize. I will take that agonizing over making sure you have the Bible right and perfect that way into an agonizing over the understanding of the people in the ministry and the concepts that you have to grow through. It is just that simple.

## II. The Three Pairs of Spiritual Shoes

Last week, I told you that every Christian should own three pairs of shoes spiritually. Remember we talked about it? I told you we talked about this one last week. We are going to talk about the other two today.

1. I told you that every Christian needs to have a pair of running shoes. 1 Corinthians 9:24 and Hebrews 12:1 say Paul says that you and I are in a race. We are in a race against time. We are in a race against Christ coming back. We are in a race. There is an urgency. We talked about understanding the urgency of the time that we live in. The first pair of shoes you need to have is a pair of good old running shoes because you are in a race.
2. Then I told you the second pair of shoes you need to have, or really boots, would be combat boots because you are going to be in a warfare.
3. Then I told you the third pair of shoes you need to have is a pair of work shoes or work boots because there is the work in the ministry.

When we look at this second lesson today, like I said, in our first lesson, we saw what happens when you put the shoes on your feet. You just got saved. Now we are going to look in the second

aspect. We will learn how to wear and use those shoes, these last two, in preparation for the ministry.

### III. The Armor of God: Standing in Spiritual Warfare

Our text this morning is going to be the incredible book of Ephesians. I want you to turn now from the book of Romans 10 and turn over to Ephesians 6. The book of Ephesians is vitally important to the young Christian. It is a book where basically, for those of you that it is new to, Paul begins to explain the body mystery that was talked about in Romans 16:15. In fact, it is one of the seven mysteries in the Bible that are given to the church.

I tell you all the time that I do not care if it is a passage of scripture, a verse, a chapter, or a book of the Bible, the first thing you have to determine, and you hear me say it all the time, is the context. This book also is an incredible book that you have to get the context. The book breaks down into two segments. Without this understanding of these two segments, as far as the context, you will never get it straightened up. In fact, you will wind up getting messed up. The book of Ephesians is a great book for the hyper-dispensationalist and the hyper-Calvinist and then your garden variety Calvinist because it is such a deep spiritual book. The book of Ephesians is probably in the New Testament what the Song of Solomon is in the Old Testament. It is a very deep book. You have to have the context.

The whole book breaks down around the two fundamental aspects that we talked about many, many times in here, and that is the concept of your standing and your state. One of the greatest fundamental studies you will ever learn about the Bible and God and yourself is understanding the doctrine of standing and state. The fact that your standing, once you get saved in Christ Jesus, is sinless perfection. The doctrine of your state deals with the physical aspect of it, and that is your daily walk with God. One is physical and one is spiritual. You are going to find that your standing is spiritual; that is in Christ. Therefore, the key to the book of Ephesians is "in Christ." Your state is where you are at in your own personal walk with God today. That is a physical aspect, you living in this world. Standing and state is basically the whole thing that the book of Ephesians is talking about.

There are two aspects of the church. Nobody teaches this anymore. You go up and ask any pastor what the two concepts of the churches are. He would not have a clue. There is a church triumphant and then there is a church militant. The church triumphant lines up with your standing in Christ Jesus. You know what the church triumphant is? That is the church, the spiritual church that you were born into, the body of Christ, the day you got saved. You know what that standing and that church triumphant means? It means whether you know it or not, the victory and the battle is already won. You already have the victory this morning even though you are still down here, faced with all this stuff, and may have several years before the rapture takes place. I have news for you. The victory has all been won. The war has been won. You have the victory in Christ Jesus, and that is your standing in Christ, and that is the church triumphant.

Now the other aspect is the church militant. That is not some radical militant group like the Aryan Brotherhood or the Missouri Militia or something like that. No, the church militant is the

fact that we are going to talk about today. It is the fact that after God saved you and gave you the victory, He left you down here in a New Testament local church, the church militant, to carry on the ministry. Notice the word "militant" because you are just told to be a soldier. Jesus Christ is the captain of your salvation. The Bible says that you and I should be a good soldier for Jesus Christ.

When you begin to look at the book of Ephesians, here is how it works:

- Chapters one, two, and three deal with the spiritual church or the church triumphant.
- Chapters four, five, and six deal with the physical church, and that will be the church militant.

One of them deals with the victory you already have in Christ Jesus and your standing. The other one deals with the fact that we are in a war down here, and we have to hold out and fight the battle even though the victory has been won in the church militant.

One time, they burned an old man at the stake, and the old inquisitors shook his finger in his face and said, "We are going to separate you from the church triumphant." The old boy looked him in his face and said, "You said you are going to separate me from the church?" meaning the Catholic church. The guy said, "You can separate me from the church militant by killing me, but you will never separate me from the church triumphant." That is the concept. That is what the book of Ephesians is built around. If you do not have that, you need to put that in your Bible someplace in Ephesians; it will help you out, especially if you are going to read it, break it down in those two passages.

Now we want to focus today on the physical aspect, the church militant. We want to talk about dealing with your feet in preparation of the ministry. Unless you are saved, your standing in Christ Jesus is sinless perfection, but you have to stay down here, and you have to fight this thing out, and you have to wage this warfare.

Now, I want to read today Ephesians 6:10-18. This is where we are going to start.

*Ephesians 6:10-18*

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

Now Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You Lord today for the fact that You have given us the Word of God. We can come as Your people and we can look therein and we can find those things that we need to be found faithful in everything that God has for us. I thank You for this church. I thank You for its stand on the Word of God. I thank You for the host of men and women who have dedicated their lives to this work, that they recognize the church triumphant and the church militant. They are part of this local New Testament body as a militant group that is going to stand and wage the spiritual warfare that we have to face today. Lord, we do love You and we thank You and praise You. We pray You will bless us today. Help us to encourage those that are in the battle. Help us to challenge those that need to be in the battle. Lord, You be found faithful and please Lord in giving us all that we need today. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for Your sake we ask it. Amen.

I have always enjoyed this passage of scripture. I have always been somewhat of a military mind myself, and I realized many, many years ago that if you wanted to study Christianity the way it should be, I learned it really by watching and reading this passage here. Have you ever noticed this? Just like Exodus 12, this passage is an incredible passage. This is one of Paul's prison epistles. What does that mean? It means he is in the "husk out." He is in jail. He is being guarded by Roman soldiers. They call them centurions or courtians. He is in a Roman prison, and he is being guarded by Roman soldiers. He lives in a world that is dominated by the Roman Empire. If you know Daniel 2, when you come through the Gentile nations, he lays it out, which follows the satanic line all the way through. You know that by the time you get to the Greek Empire, which is around 200, 300 BC somewhere in there, that Rome defeats the Greeks at about 100 BC thereabouts, and then Rome becomes the world power. In this period of time here, which is about 60 AD, Rome is at its zenith. Rome is at its pinnacle of world domination. He is in Asia Minor, and yet Asia Minor fills the footprint of Rome everywhere. If you would go to Europe in this period of time, into France, into Germany, into England, if you would go just about any place in Europe during this period of time, you would find that all those nations, all that land, is under the domination of the Roman Empire. They are at their pinnacle.

The Roman Empire was carried on its feet by the Roman army. I do not think that there probably was a greater army anywhere on the face of the planet at any time in history than the Roman army. Right up the road here, we have a place called Fort Leavenworth. Fort Leavenworth has a war college, and all the generals of the United States and many of the generals from foreign nations go to that war college. I belong to a military club, and I go down once a month, and most of the times all of the visiting generals are there, and I get a chance to meet with them and talk with them, and many of the American generals are there, and I get to be able to talk. We talk

back and forth and converse, and I have had some great conversations with them. You realize that at Fort Leavenworth today, in the war college, when they study tactics and strategy, they still follow and teach some of the basic tactics that were used by the Roman Empire. They carried the Roman world everywhere it went. They were the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen.

You know what? It always bothered me that when Paul wanted to give you and me a picture of what your life and my life should be like, why in the world did he pick a pagan, godless, forsaken, demon possessed, satanic line of the Roman Empire? Why did he pick the people who were demon possessed, demon craved under the Pharaohs, under the Neros, and under the Caesars, that their whole world they lived for one thing, and that is to wipe out Bible Christianity? Why did he pick the very people that had put him in jail? I will tell you why. He does it the same way that I look at stories of great valor. Stories of men and women who have put their life on the line for their military. He does it the same way that I told you many times about the 82nd Airborne, 505th Rapid Deployment, and 101st Airborne, and all of those elite groups like the SEALs and the Special Forces that they can drop in any place, any time. Most of those men are unsaved. Most of those men are going to die and go to hell, but most of those men you would never want to meet one-on-one in an alley someplace.

He is looking at those Roman soldiers like I look at the elite of this world, and he is saying to himself, "If I could get Christians to be as dedicated and as sold out to the ministry as the pagan Roman soldiers are to their government, I could turn this world around to Christ." How many times have I said it? If I could get most of you to take this thing seriously, if I could get most of you to see and understand the urgency, but then understand the warfare and realize that there are eternal consequences to this, there is an end to this, and someday we are going to have to face the reality of what God called you to do and also the reality that you did nothing. I know what he is thinking. He is thinking the same thing I think. He is looking at the armament of a first-century Roman soldier, and he is equating it in a spiritual sense to the things in the Bible and saying to himself, "If I could get God's people to be as disciplined and as structured and as trained that they carried the Roman Empire everywhere it went by the army on their feet, if I could get God's people to carry the gospel on their feet, we would win the world to Christ." That is what he is thinking. That is exactly what he is thinking.

Now look at verses 10, 11, and 12 here. These are very important.

*Ephesians 6:10-12*

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Let me just say this. There is a difference between where we are at now and where Paul was at, where they were in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, they fought literal battles with literal swords. They went up against literal armies. We do not have time to get into it this morning, but I could take the Bible and I could show you how in Genesis 3:15, where it talks

about the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, I could take you in the Old Testament and show you how that serpent seed physically walked its way all the way through the Old Testament. Then I could show you where that physical seed got killed out, wiped out, and then Satan knows that the physical seed is not going to work anymore, so he brings it about in a spiritual seed. Why do you think David went out and killed Goliath? Goliath was a Philistine. Goliath was of that seed. When David killed him, he wiped out Goliath. Goliath was a remnant of those giants. I do not see any giants walking around today. I do not see you going out with an unshaved person at work that gives you a tough time and getting out your sword and hacking his head off. It is the difference between the literal spiritual seed, the literal spiritual seed in the Old Testament where God wipes it out, and in the physical, spiritual seed where it comes in in another form and fashion. The difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God. Old Testament and the New Testament.

Our battle, we do not go out and fight armies over the things of God. We do not fight individuals in arm-to-hand combat. We do not use bows and arrows, swords. We do not hack their arms off, hack their legs off. We do not kill them literally. Our battle is a spiritual warfare. That is what he is saying. He is saying we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We do not wrestle against principalities. There is the devil against power. They get the rulers of darkness. There is the devil right there. In the Old Testament, that was all literal. Then they got wiped out, and the devil said, "I am going to change tactics." And then he went spiritual.

Then he says in verse 13:

*Ephesians 6:13*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

I want to tell you this. Four times. Here is your job. Your job and my job is one job. He tells you four times in two verses. Your job and my job is one word. It is the word "to stand." That is all we are here for. That is all we are here for. Last week, I told you how that men and women are afraid, so they cannot get saved because they are afraid to get saved because of their fear factor, and they are afraid. So they never get saved. I guess probably fear is one of the greatest things to keep people back from being saved. Old Bob Jones, the senior, used to talk about how the people were afraid to get saved. He talked about the fact that it is important that fear is a healthy emotion. The Bible says that Noah moved with fear in the preparing of the ark and the saving of his household. Fear is an emotion God gave you. But you do not let that fear keep you from getting saved. You get saved because you are afraid not to.

In the same token, you have God's people after they get saved that are afraid to take a stand. Let me tell you something. When we start talking about feet shod here with the preparation, we start talking about the combat boots and the work boots. When you start seeing how your feet, when it talks about a little bit here, "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," when you start to see exactly what that means, I am going to tell you something. It will mean you taking a stand against some of your friends. It will mean you taking a stand in some cases maybe with your own family. It will mean you taking a stand against people in this church that do not want to

do what is right, and you know what is right. You could have the right of turning them around by saying, "You know what, what you did was wrong," instead of just going along with them. So you have the fear factor in both cases. Some people are afraid to get saved. After they get saved, some people are afraid to stand.

I want to tell you something. You are being here this morning. I do not know why you are here. I mean, I have an idea. But I do not know inside your heart why you are here. But I will tell you what, if it is any other reason than to get yourself better prepared to take a stand for God, you are here for the wrong reason. He says, "were to take the armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand," then he says, "stand therefore." And up there in verse 11, he says, "that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." You are going to take a stand. You are to take a stand. You are to take a stand.

## IV. Components of the Armor

Down here in verses 14 through 18, we have the armor. We are going to do with this exactly what we did when we were in Exodus last week. We are going to put it into an order that is conducive to what we want to look at here to get to our point. There are seven pieces of armor here. He talks about loins girt about with truth, breastplate of righteousness, one we are going to focus on a little bit, or the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Notice the gospel of peace, just like Romans 10:15. Shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit, praying always. What we are going to do with these seven is exactly what we did with the four aspects of Exodus 12. We are going to look now only in a different aspect, different format. We are going to look at your feet, not at the day of salvation, but you put your shoes on. We are going to look today after you are saved, getting yourself prepared, getting your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We will put these into a study format that will go along with our outline.

- Loins Girt with TruthThe first thing here I have down the way I wanted to do it is loins girt about with truth. Last week in Exodus 12, we saw the Bible talked about loins girt. That is the day you got saved. The day you got saved, you got the Bible, but you do not know what to do with the Bible. In preparation, you take that, and I told you last week that your loins is the strength of a man or a woman.Job 38:1-3

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. You ever see a man when he gets up and he is going to do something, or he is going to, your classic scene is, you are in a bar someplace. I hope you are not, but you are in a bar someplace, and somebody yells at you something over there, and they are picking on you, and the guy finally gets up and is going to do something. What is the first thing he does? He gets up and he, you know what he is doing? Girding up his loins, pulling up his pants. Now we live in a world today where everybody is trying to pull them down. He says, "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee an answer." The context of that, doctrinally, is the great white throne judgment. That is a picture of God demanding from an

unsaved man or a woman some answers why you think your righteousness got you through instead of trusting God's Son's righteousness. That is what it is, doctrinally. Let us put it in an application for you and for me. 1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: That Bible says that you ought to be ready, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. It starts with having your loins girt about with truth. When you got saved, it just said "loins girt." Now we are in preparation mode, and it is now taking the Bible and adding it to your loins and making your walk straight. Remember when we studied on Song of Solomon on New Year's Eve? We talked about the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it talked about His legs being like legs of pillars of marble fitted with sockets of gold. That is a picture of where you ought to be as a child of God. God's legs are like marble. There is no harder metal on planet earth. In fact, they use it for tombstones because it does not wear and it lasts forever. It is a picture of Christ being firmly, steadfastly in His feet, unmovable, and knowing what He is standing for. We have a problem with that. I do not really care what a person believes about the Bible. I talk with people all the time, hear some of the weirdest stuff you ever heard in your life. There is a night Bible study through all the course of my years. I have heard about everything there is to hear. I do not really look at somebody, and I mean, I may not agree with them, and I may think that they do not know what they are talking about, but the bottom line is, I can respect a man or a woman with what they believe. Even if it is wrong, what I respect about that is at least that they know why they believe what they believe. It drives me crazy. People shoot their mouth off about the Bible, and you throw them an open Bible, and they do not have a clue. Not only explain it to me, they do not even know why they believe it themselves. They heard it from somebody else. They read it somewhere and got it off the internet. So therefore, that is the truth of it. That is where the research ends. Most of the people you are going to deal with can be put away in a heartbeat when it comes to questioning you and authority the Word of God simply because they do not even know why they believe what they believe. It is called tactics. It is something that you learn as you get your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Let me tell you something. Real strength of a child of God is in the truth that he has and the ability that he has to use that truth. That is the key. That is why if you do not learn the Bible, if you do not learn how to use the Bible, you will never take a stand. You know why? Because you do not know what the stand is all about. You do not even know what the stand is. You do not even know what you should be standing for. You just think, "Well, we are a church, and they have a Bible, therefore I am supposed to stand for the Bible, stand for this, stand for that." You do not have a clue when the Bible gave you two clues about the wiles of the devil, and you can run that back and find out what that is, and then find out what the evil day is. You have to stand against two things: The wiles of the devil. An evil day. You better find out what they are if you are going to have to stand for them, do not you think? He says, "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee an answer." Hey, I am going to tell you something. The world wants an answer from you. If they know you are a Christian, they are going to belittle you. They are going to make fun of you. They are going to do everything they can to discredit you. You know what? You need to be able to stand up to that. Nobody likes conflict unless

you are an idiot. Nobody goes out looking for a fight. Nobody likes to get into a consternation issue with somebody. Nobody likes to go out looking for trouble. Most of God's people do not do that. But when somebody challenges you and somebody puts the credibility of the Bible and God on the line, that is where you take your stand. That may be people that you work with. It may be people in your family. It may be people in this church. We put in our deacons, what, about two, three years ago now? I told everybody on there was going to be a deacon. I told everybody, "Here is what I expect." I even taped it. I said, "Here is what I expect. You have a week to think about it. If you do not want to do it, you cannot do it, then I am fine. No problem." Nobody, everybody was fine with it. You know what? You know what one of the jobs of a deacon is in this church? To stand for the integrity and what this church teaches and what it believes. You say, "Well, I do not agree with it." What are you doing as a deacon? I mean, what part of the tape did you not understand? That is all the question I got. There has to be something that we stand for. When I started this church, when God started it through us about six, seven years ago, I was the only one at that point that knew, other than my family, that knew what I wanted to stand for. But that is not true anymore because everybody now has come in and grown into the point where if it is our church, and it is worth protecting, and it is worth taking care of, you have to take a stand. I love Billy Jack movies. How many ever saw a Billy Jack movie? Oh, Billy Jack fans here. Bob, did you ever see Billy Jack? You did not. You remind me of Billy Jack. My favorite line of the Billy Jack movie, and I do not even know which one it is, he made several. My favorite line of Billy Jack movie is when he is in the park, and these bullies come up to him, and he is pushing everybody around. Billy Jack did not like bullies. I do not like bullies either. I am not Billy Jack. And so all these, and Billy Jack comes into the park. This guy is really tough, in front of his friends, and he is looking at Billy Jack, and he is telling all these things he is going to do, how he is going to whip his this and whip his that. Billy Jack just standing there laughing, a little smiling at him. The guy finally says, "What is so funny?" Billy Jack says one thing. He says, "You know what is funny? In just a second, I am going to wheel around, and I am going to kick your face in, and you are not going to be able to do about it." And then he did. And you know what? He did not do anything about it. You know what we need in churches today? Billy Jacks. You do not go looking for trouble, but you sure make sure the bullies find it when they get it. You let somebody go off on you about the Bible, you just sit there and smile. How many times when somebody was railing on me about what I did not know about the Bible, what they did, I just sit there and smile. I would not say it, but in my mind, I would say that famous line, "You know what? About 35 seconds. I am going to kick your head off spiritually. You are not doing anything about it." Loins girt about with truth. That translates into your walk, and that goes into your feet through your loins.

- Breastplate of Righteousness Then he says this, "having on the breastplate of righteousness." This is one that drills directly with your walk and your feet, is it not? Notice over here in Romans 13:12-14. You see, breastplate of righteousness, that is like a flat vest. They discovered after World War II that almost 85% of the death casualties were due to body injuries. Not so much from bullets, but from fragments, like a mortar fragment or an artillery fragment. Not a projectile, but a piece of fragment, a piece of flak. So they developed after World War II and wore them in Korea, wore them in Vietnam. Anybody who was in Vietnam

had to lug it around, wear it, weighed about 35 pounds. They called them flak vests. Police officers wear them today, except they are bulletproof. You notice your average police officer, and you look closely at his shirt, you will see that he looks like he has got some big piece of something underneath of him. He has got a bulletproof vest on. That thing will stop just about anything. It can stop maybe a rifle, but it will stop all the handguns. You can shoot him. I knew a guy a long time, I do not know where he is at now, but he was a friend of mine, and he used to go around doing demonstrations. He made vests, and he would walk around, and he would demonstrate to me, take a .44 Magnum and hold it and shoot himself in the stomach. I think he is dead now. Anyway. That is what you have got. This thing here is an armor. It is armor. It is like a vest. You saw the old knights and what they put on the armor with their arms stick out and the metal thing around them. It is called the breastplate of righteousness. This one protects your heart because the thing you have got to protect, number one, as a child of God and as a soldier, is your attitude of heart. He says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and all thy soul." It is your attitude. When your heart attitude goes, it does not matter what you have got up here. It does not matter how well you do anything. The breastplate protects your heart. So he says in Romans 13:12-14: Romans 13:12-14

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Look what he said. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Like you are putting on a coat. How do you put on Christ? I know how to put on a coat. I put one arm in here, one arm in here, and pull it up and zip it up. That protects me from the cold. If I had a flak vest, I would put one arm through this hole, one arm through that hole, zip it up, and it could go out. When the bombs went off, it would catch the fragments. How do you put on the Lord Jesus Christ? Make a coat in the concept that He is your armor of light, that He is your flak vest, that He protects your heart and your internal organs, your vital organs. He says in 2 Corinthians 6:7: 2 Corinthians 6:7

By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, It is your new nature. That is making sure you keep your heart right with God. Then it said, "make no provision." That means food. No provision for the flesh. Do not feed your flesh. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The breastplate of righteousness. Make sure that your attitude of heart. Hey, let me tell you something. When a child of God begins to have struggles, and a child of God begins that wayward walk away from God and away from church and away from, I do not care what they say. The bottom line is this. It starts in the heart attitude that it changes of loving Him with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul. Do you have any understanding how hard that is? To love Him with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, one of the other places adds to it, "and all your strength." Brother, that is true because sometimes it takes all the strength that you have to keep loving Him in the face of things you have to put up with, which is mostly yourselves. I can teach you the Bible. I can train you in the truth, but I cannot give you the right attitude

toward God. You have to develop that yourself. I cannot make you feel the urgency. I cannot give you the steel in your backbone that makes you want to take a stand no matter who it is. I cannot do that. You have to decide that.

- Shield of Faith Then the next thing, the third one, go back to verse 16 now of chapter six. Ephesians 6:16

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Now this one is interesting. I do not know if you have caught it. I do not know if you have seen the switch up here. I do not know if you, and maybe you would not if you did not just read and throw it. But basically so far, all of our armor has been offensive armor. All of the armor that we have seen so far is that you put on when you move out, you move forward, you advance for God, you take the attack to the enemy. Now this piece is defensive. Whether you know it or not, all warfare breaks down into these two components. By the way, so does ministry. I have seen Christians in both cases. I have seen Christians that were great preachers. They were great witnesses. They did great things for God. They could get up and they could witness to anybody, and they could do this and they could do that, or they could get up, give a testimony, or they knew a lot about the Bible, and they were great on the offense. But take one person that says something bad about them or takes a cheap shot at them behind their back, and they fold up like a broken accordion. Then I have seen people on the other side who could take it and take it and take it. I have seen some of God's people in my years who could take it and take it and take it and take it and take it that I did not think they could take anymore, and they still take it. But they never do one thing meaningful for God all of their lives. The ministry is a balance, folks. That warfare, that armor for this warfare that you are going to take a stand, it is offensive and defensive. You can be great on the offense, but if you do not have a defense, you are going to get taken out. It is just that simple. The devil knows each of our, I do not know what yours is, but we all have our weaknesses. In ministry, I am talking about our weaknesses in life, we all have those, but in ministry, we all have our weaknesses. What a good Christian ought to do is identify those weaknesses. Most of the time, we do not want to identify them. We pretend we do not have them because we are not honest with ourselves because we want everybody to think we are something we are not, and we think it ourselves, and so we do not focus on our spiritual weaknesses in ministry. I am telling you, everybody has their weaknesses, and I will tell you something else, you may not want to admit it, and you may not know where it is at, but the devil knows where it is at. Oh, he does. He has got it in his little notebook. He has got it. Verse 16 says, "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." All ministry has two aspects. All ministry is going to have an offense where you are on the charge, and then you have a defense that you are going to have to defend yourself. Most Christians are not good at a balance of both. They are just not good at it. This is why I told you that when you get to this point, and these will be your work boots, okay, because you have to do a work for the ministry. You have to have the running shoes because you are in a race. We have to make haste. You have to have the combat boots because we are in a warfare. But then you have to have the work boots. That is why I told you the work of the ministry. This is what you are preparing yourself. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Work boots with steel toes. Steel toes. This is why Paul tells young Timothy over there

in 2 Timothy 2:3 that you and I, and he, were going to endure a hardness, a hardness, a hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. A hardness. Years ago, when I was just a young guy, and I remember this probably took place, I think I got right with God in April, around April. I remember I went to my first camp working there to help the kids. I started in the ministry with where the gospel and the stars. I had a telescope, I knew astronomy, and God hooked me up with another boy, and we worked out together, and we had a great thing, and we went to camp all summer long. I worked all day long at a job, and then I drove out after work and waited around after the service, and then I stayed out till 11 or 12 o'clock showing these kids and doing the gospel and the stars. Then I drove back home, go to bed, get up for work the next morning, and do the same thing every night at camp. But on senior high week and junior high week, they always fell on my two weeks vacation. I remember I just got right with God in April, and I was doing my gospel and the stars, and we had an old war horse come in and preach in a senior high camp, and I was sitting down there, and he is preaching out of Ephesians 6. I will never forget what he said. He said, "You know what?" He says, "Some of you young men, some of you young ladies, you are going to surrender your life to service for God. That is what this camp is all about." He said, "Some of you are going to really mean it for God." He said, "I want to tell you something." He said, "If you decide you are going to stand for God, and you are going to decide you are going to do what is right, and you decide that you are not going to compromise, you are not going to quit, if you decide you are going to do what God has called you to do, and you mean it." He said, "I want to tell you right now. The battle that you are going to enter into, the battle that you are going to get into, is going to make World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Chateau Ferry, Battle of Bull Run, and every major battle down through history, look like a bunch of campfire girls having a cookout." I remember as a young man sitting down there listening to that man say that, and at the time, I could not grasp what he was saying. In fact, I do not think I really fully believed what he was saying because I was new at this. When I went down and got saved that night and at that Sunday night and went down and rededicated my life and got up off my knees, I thought every Christian in that building just loved God as much as I did. If you were to try to tell me that there were deacons cheating on their wives, and there were people backbiting this person, and there was gossip going on, and there were lies going on, and there was drinking going on, and there was smoking going on, I would have fought you. But since that time, boy, have I learned some things. I did not understand what that old boy said that night down there almost 40 years ago in my life. But I want to tell you after 36 years in the ministry and seeing everything you could see and dealing with everything you had to deal with and being part of it in my life, you know what? I understand exactly what he is saying. I want to say something to you, and you better get it now. We have a lot of new people here coming in, and a lot of people excited, a lot of people have been around for a while, you are getting plugged in. Let me just give you one thing. If you do not hear anything else I said today, you better hear this. If you are going to decide in your heart you are going to give your life to God, and you are going to get the things out of your life, and you are going to do what God wants you to do, and you are going to take this stand, and you got saved, and you got your shoes on your feet. Now you are at the point where you want to have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. That is your mindset, and that is your attitude. I am going

to tell you right now, the battle you are going to get into against you, to keep you from ever getting where God wants you to be, is going to make all the battles of this world look just like a bunch of little kids shooting marbles. You are going to get into it, my friend, faster and greater and a greater degree, and you are going to, you better learn not only how to do the offensive side, you better learn how to do the defensive side. But boy, they are going to come after you. They are going to come after you. People do not really see what the ministry is, and I do not know how to even show it to them. You get some of you young guys, and I know this is true because it was true of me. You get young guys to come in, and young gals too. When they see me preach up here, and when I am not here, they see somebody else preaching, they see people working with people, and they see all of the things that you do and people do, and they see tonight with John and Joe getting up there, and every other guy that goes out there and does that, and they see all of that stuff that goes on. They see all of that, and they think that that is really the side of ministry that they see. They see us Thursday night, Sunday morning, the preaching ministry, the discipleship. They see all of the things that are the outward, the offensive things. But I want to tell you something, my friend, there is a defensive side to it. There is a side that you never see until you get into ministry. Some of you are already seeing it, but I will tell you what, I cannot train you for that. That is part of the education process that you get, that you have got to get. There is a defensive side. Listen, in 36 years of ministry, the main attacks in my life have never been from the lost world or unsaved people. It has always been from God's people. You better learn that. You better not try to go any farther in this if you think, and there is the balance, man. There is the balance. There is the balance. I will tell you what the problem with every one of you is that messages like this are good for. Because it is found over here in Luke 14:28. You do not have to turn to it. You write it down. I will read it to you. He says: Luke 14:28

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? You see, when you see the offensive side, the glory side, people standing here and preaching or standing up here and singing or K-13's at night or discipling or Bible basics and people working with people and people getting saved, that is the glory side. But most people see that. They do not see the other side, and then they do not sit down and count the cost. So when it happens, and when you get blown-sided and you get knocked down, and you have to take a stand, and you have to use the shield, notice it says, "to quench the fiery darts." People are going to be throwing fiery darts at you all your life once you decide to take that stand. He says in verse 29 that if you do not finish it, they are happy to mock you. It uses the word "mock" that you decide you are going to build this tower for God, you do not count the cost, you cannot finish it, and then they laugh at you because you did not finish it. They make fun of you. Boy, you better learn that principle, kid. I am telling you, you want in this fight with me? You better get some steel in your backbone and gravel in your gut. You better be realizing it is more than just standing up and teaching. It is taking it when nobody is going to take it but you. It is enduring a hardness of the good soldier of Jesus Christ. There are going to be people, God's people, who are going to get jealous of you. They are going to get envious of you because God is doing something with you that He is not doing with them. I have seen it all my life. I am telling you, you are going to have people. I have seen situations in my life where some guy or some gal brought some

guy or gal to church, and they brought them to church, and that person that they brought got saved, began to grow, began to get into the Bible. The person that brought them got a better deal someplace else, and they started fading out and fading out and fading out, and then come into me in my office and sit down and talk to me and tell me how rotten this person really is after you brought them to Christ, and they got saved, and now you are going to sit there and tell me how goofy they are, how rotten they are. What do you think I fell off the turnip truck yesterday? You think I cannot discern what your problem is? That they are growing past where you were? How embarrassing it must be for you to bring somebody to this church four years ago, and now they are up here, and you are down here. I get upset too. That has got to be embarrassing for somebody. So what do we do? Do we get right? No, we do not get right. We always trash the person because we want to maintain how good we look. I did not buy into it. She said, "Well, we are going to leave the church." And I said, "Well, I guess you will have to leave the church." "We are going to go find another church." And between this church and the next church, she stopped and picked up a carton of cigarettes and a six-pack of beer. Now I know what your problem was. They are going to lie about you. Sometimes they are going to tell the truth about you. Let me tell you something. Proverbs 6:16 says there are six things. Proverbs 6:16

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: You know what it is? It is sowing discord among the brethren. You know an unsaved person cannot do that because they are not part of the brethren. You know God's people are the most famous sowers of discord among God's people you have ever met in your life. You know what? I have news for you. You are not going to stop it. You are not going to change it. There is not going to be any revival anywhere in the history of the world that is going to fix that problem. You are going to have to use the shield. We had a guy in this church who started the church. I will not tell you who he is. Both of you do not remember him. Most of you do not even know him. He was a good guy, but he quit growing at some point in his life. He wanted to coast because he thought being with me for 20 years would give him a skateboard ride. He found out that that does not work. He comes at a point where younger people were doing things that he thought he had to do. He got to the point where he thought that he even sandbagged some of you younger Christians to me. But like I do not know what is going on. He got to the point where he got so irritable with it, and he got so frustrated with it that he had to just bail out and go someplace else. He is not going anywhere else. You see, because his real problem was authority. That is why he quit growing. So he cannot find a church to go to, so he just has one in his home so he can become his own authority. Hello? You are not going to stop that. We are not going to stop that. We may not have any here like that right now, but give us time. We still have early in the service. You are not going to stop that. There are going to be people who badmouth you, who are going to try to hurt you because they are dead in the water spiritually, and the only thing they can do to maintain their spirituality is to bust you. Notice I did not say me. I said you because they never say anything bad about me. We have a guy in this church came to this church about four years ago. I will tell you who he is. One of my dearest friends in the whole wide world. I love him more than he knows it. He has been an inspiration to me many times. He does not even know it. But I knew this guy when he went to another church. Barb and I had said many, many times, "You know, if it was

anybody we could ever have in our church to be just this couple." This guy made a terrible mistake. You know what the mistake he was? He questioned his pastor on something his pastor did. He questioned his pastor. Now this guy was a deacon. This guy taught Sunday school. This guy did about everything. He had been in that church probably 40, 30, 20 years. He was a stay. He was a rock. But because he questioned the pastor on one thing, suddenly now he is a bad guy. The pastor did what all pastors do when they are insecure and they are idiots. He got all of his little cronies together, and everybody made him a bad guy. When he came to my church, pastor called me on the phone and said, "I hear so and so is going to your church." I said, "Yeah, he is." He said, "Well, then let me tell you about so and so. Just so you know." You know what I said back to him? I said, "That amazes me. That amazes me." He said, "Well, brother," he says, "that is just the way it goes sometimes." I said, "But that amazes me." I said, "Here is a guy. But for 20 years, he was a rock in your church. You probably figure up his tithe compared to everybody else in that church in 20 some years. He probably gave more than half any five people in that church. I know he did everything in the church. For 20 years, this guy was your rock. You had him teach. You had him preach. And suddenly overnight, you know what I do? I start checking water fountains in your church. I think you have got two different water fountains, and as long as you drink out of this one, you are a good guy, but when you drink out of this one, now you are a bad guy. I think he drank out of the bad guy water fountain. I said, I will tell you something else. If a guy that long with you that you had to do all those things, and now you are telling me he is a bad guy, why did you put him in all those places for 20 years? That does not speak well of your leadership. Maybe the problem was not him. The problem was you." Boy, you got real quiet then. "Well, I just want to let you know." "Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your concern. Thank you. Mucho gracias." I am bisexual. I speak two languages. Oh, that is bilingual. I am sorry. I speak Spanish a little bit. Nacho Belgrande. I am telling you. There are pastors in this city. More than we could put on a bus. There are pastors in this city who are so intimidated by anybody that they will lie about you. They will blast you. They will do everything in the world to try to hinder you because they are afraid of you. I am telling you, you are going to have to take it. You are going to have to realize that is just the way it is. You are going to have to know that there are people that are going to get under conviction by the Holy Spirit of God, and they are going to see you do right, and they are not doing right, and they see you doing right, and they are not doing right, and the Holy Spirit of God takes what you are doing and what they are not doing, and boy, He gives them a fit. Now they do not have the courage or the guts to go out on a full moon, rip their clothes off, paint their bodies, and curse at God. No, they will just take it out on you. Take it out on you. Now I wish we could change that with a gigantic revival. I wish we could start with all the preachers in this town, get them down here and bring somebody in and just make it all right. Then I would get all the Christians in the world and bring them in, and then we would get four or five people come in, and we would get that right. Then we could all hold hands and kumbaya our way to heaven. You know what? It is not going to happen. It is never going to happen. The devil knows the weakness of each body in ministry, and if you do not fix that weakness, he will exploit that weakness. That is the way it goes, boys. Come to the ministry. You are not going to change it, but you have to stand up to it. I remember one time years ago, I was just a young

guy, but if I had been a little longer and knew what was going on, I would have done it. I remember one time years ago under Mel Shabaka, we were out rocking down there, and I talked about him in a positive sense because he is the apostle Paul in my life, but many people hated Mel. There was a faction in his own church back there that just thought he was anti-Christ because he believed the King James Bible was the Word of God. Great schism was happening back then. I thought we walked down the hall, and this big old football player that Mel wanted to the Lord and was disciplined and worked with and got his wife out of the pit. We were walking down there, and somebody took a cheap shot saying something about Mel. That old boy just took it. He did not know any better, see. He did it in Jesus' name with love and truth. He grabbed that old boy and picked him clean up off the wall, and he said, "Your personal opinion about Mel Shabaka is your own business, but you keep it to yourself because he is the apostle Paul in my life, and he turned my life around. You say one more word in my presence, and I am going to throw you through that window," and put him down. Now I could not do that. I would have to stand right there and grow up in my car and get my jack and say, "Stand on this. You say one more word, and I am going to put this jack down." You have to stand for something, or you stand for nothing. It is that simple. Hey, there are going to be some of you people in here that you are going to raise your children up, and they are going to be in ministry with you side by side the way they are supposed to be. They are going to be in a little right now. They are going to grow up, and they are going to learn to love God. They are going to do this, and they are going to learn to love that. You know what? There are going to be some good, godly, sanctified couple out there, a Christian out there who has lost their kids. The kids will not come to church. Kids are out in the world someplace, and they are going to get so convicted because they failed as parents, but they do not have the guts to deal with it that they are going to blame you and your kids for their mistakes. Get used to it! Welcome to the ministry. Deal with it, brother. I am telling you, these are the darts. There is no class I can teach you for that aspect of ministry. I tell you all the time, whatever happens when you deal with people, do not take it personal. People are going to start to grow, and they do not want to grow anymore, and they do not want to get up and say, "Hey, I am at a fellowship, I am drinking, I am smoking, I am running around with a wild, wealthy crowd," so you know what I am doing? "I am just going to blame it on you." Take it! The greatest aspect of all that bull crap is simply this. There is a judgment scene of Christ coming, pal! Have fun with it. I can train you in the Bible. I can train you in Bible principles. I can train you in Bible concept. But this kind of education you need to learn going through it and then growing through it. The shield of faith is to deflect those fiery darts that are going to hit your heart, wound your spirit, get you to lose your focus, get you to be discouraged. Many of you are really doing well. This is a little personal addendum here. Many of you are doing really well, if not most of you. I really see the hand of God on our church and what God is doing and going to do. It had nothing to do with me. Obviously, it had to do with the Bible, but it has even more to do with the fact that many of you are grasping those principles, you have got your shoes on your feet, and now you want to have your feet shod with a preparation. You want to do something with what you know, and God is blessing this church because of your attitude. All it is, as far as I am concerned, hey, I have been teaching the same stuff. I found a tape. I was watching a war movie, and I found it, I

forgot I had it, and I was watching a war movie, and it went off the war movie. I was getting ready about 11 o'clock, and I was getting ready to go up, and then suddenly here I was. The date on the tape was 1985. I had to look at me. Man, I was good looking back then. I tell you, I had hair, and I watched by myself, and I was doing a Bible study, much like I do on Thursday night. I listened to that sucker for an hour, and I came away with one great satisfying fact deep down in my mind and my heart. It was probably the most gratifying thing that happened to me all of last week. It was simply that I went to bed that night with a smile on my face knowing that there it was, 1985, here it is, 2009, I do not know how many years that is, but it is a lot. The bottom line is this, I still believe and teach the same things the same way today I did back then. I have not changed one iota about what I believe or what I teach. I thank God for that. You may not appreciate that. I did not say it so you could appreciate it. I said it so I could appreciate it again. I need an appreciation for it. I need a hug. Thank you. I will tell you something. Most of you, many of you are doing really well. But let me give you one thing you have got to work on. I cannot teach you this, but I am giving you the advice and I am giving you the counsel on it. You are only half done. You are half baked. You have got the great spirit to give. You have got the great spirit to love unconditionally. You have got the ability to forgive unconditionally. You have got all the good things. But the weakness side of you is the fact that you better get your shield up because you are going to be vulnerable, and you are going to get clobbered. In the Christian world today, write this somewhere in your Bible: no good deed will go unpunished. You are going to get clobbered. You are going to get clobbered. You have a great heart. You have a sweet spirit. You have an appetite and an aptitude for ministry. But you need also to get a hard side, a shield. You see, you have got to learn to endure a hardness without crushing the spirit. It is a balance. It is a balance. Very frankly, I think it is good. I do not know much about football. I like to watch it. I have got to say this to you. I think the Chiefs probably, maybe not this year. I do not know. I do not know. But I want to tell you something. Maybe they will not. I do not know. But I will tell you what. It will not be because they do not have the right kind of code for the right kind of attitude. You see, the Larry Johnsons and the Jim Bowies, what is that guy's catch? Jim Bowie was the guy with the Alamo. What was his name? Duane Bow? Duane Bow, yeah. Those guys, million dollar guys. And then I am just saying there, but they are all the same. You get, somebody pays you 30 million dollars, you think you must be pretty good. So you know what you do? You walk in the field thinking you are good. You have got a 30 million dollar walk. You walk out there with all the rookies laying around. You look around and you say, "You know what? I do not have to work as hard as they do. I can take a sluff off." You know why? Because I am worth 30 million dollars. Now if you do not know human nature that way, go look in the mirror. And you are why they walk around out there, they do not give as hard. You know what he does? What is that guy's, what is the coach's name? Todd Haley. You know what he does? He will take guys that were 60 million dollars and put them on a third string. Bring the other guys up. Well, how is that for a 30 million dollar third stringer? He will set you out of a game and put somebody else in. Because you do not, because your mind is not on the game. Military is the same way. Elite military groups, they have what they call spot promotions. A lieutenant is a captain, but he should not be. But because he is in the unit that he is in, and he holds the line what he does, instead of being a lieutenant, he is a

captain. A major should be a captain, he is a major. A colonel should be a major, he is a colonel. Why? Because they have spot promotions, and because you hold the line, do what you are supposed to do, and keep focused and do the mission, you get those spot promotions. You screw one up, you drop back a rank. That is the way churches ought to be run. You do not get to do anything around here because you are my friend. You are all my friend. Somebody says, "Well, I have been with you for 50 years." Well, congratulations, thank you. That would probably be an endurance award at some point, but you think that cuts, I am interested in people who are going to keep their feet shod. You know what a leader is? In my mind, a leader is he or her that whatever they do, they never lose focus on the task that is before them. That is a leader. They never get sidetracked. Boy, in the ministry, there is a lot to sidetrack it. You get puffed up with what you know. You get your nose better to join because you do not get to do something you think you ought to do. You do not have the shield up, and the devil knows what your weaknesses are. He knows what your weaknesses are, and he is going to take advantage of it. If I was running a football team, and I run an NFL, you know how I do it? I would say everybody has got a base salary of \$100,000 this year. That is all you are going to get, and here is what we are going to do. Every touchdown you get, you get \$10,000. Every good block you make, you get \$5,000. Every good run you make, you get \$6,000. Do not you know performance would improve? Well, I do not understand what is wrong with that. I think that is the way it ought to be, but that is the way it is here. You do not get any points for being my friend. I love you. I am glad you are my friend. Yes, we have been through some deep time together. I appreciate that, but you know what? What has all that got to do with the book and feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and keeping it focused? You tell me. I am telling you. I am telling you. I can train you in all those things, but you have to. You have to endure a hardness.

- **Helmet of Salvation** Then he says the helmet of salvation. That is a great example because it simply says this. If you are not saved when you get into this battle, you might as well forget it. The devil is going to knock you out before you get started. That is why you see so many people come to church, and they do not last very long. You know why? Because they are not saved in the first place. They do not have anything for God to build on. They come down and made some emotional experience, and said, "Oh, I want to get saved," cried, crooked out tears, threw kind of snot over the front two rows, and did all those things. They went right back up and never in their mind had any intention of repenting and turning life around. Then six weeks later, right back to the world again. Helmet of salvation.
- **Sword of the Spirit** Then he says the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That is your weapon. The weapon is the most important thing of a foot soldier. When I was in the basic training in 1968, my primary weapon back then was an M14. As far as I am concerned, the greatest battle rifle the world has ever seen. A little bit later on, we switched over to M16s. I do not know how many times I can remember. In my outfit, when I went to AIT, everybody had to qualify expert. If you did not qualify expert, then you were out. It did not take any second place. Everybody had to fire expert. You know how we learned to fire expert? The key to firing is holding that rifle steady and not squeezing too fast and knocking the front sight off. You know what we did? 100 times a day. We would get in a prone position, and we would take turns. On the front of that M14, there was a leaf sight that comes

up like this. They put a dime on that sight. That dime would just teeter there. You had to be able to kick the safety off, squeeze that trigger, and make that rifle click without the dime falling off the front sight. You could do that. You could hit any target you want. They did not just take it out there and throw us out there and give you a bunch of bullets and say, "Get better at it." They did not give you a machine gun and say, "Just spray the area." They wanted one shot, one kill. One shot, one kill. It was the proficiency. The only way you hit that target downrange is to practice with that weapon. There were many a nights in the middle of the night, two o'clock in the morning, boy, in the barracks, the lights came on. Our rifles were stacked down the middle of the barracks. Many of a night, that DI would come in and kick the garbage can over and beat a thing, a flashlight, and woke everybody up, got everybody out of them racks, and we pulled them rifles and got those rifles in our hands. Hit that barracks with about twice as long as this thing here. He would walk all the way down through that thing. He would get everybody sitting down that floor on the side squad bay of the barracks. He would get down there at the end where the light switch was, and we just got our eyes adjusted to the lights. He would turn the lights off, and he would say, "Take it apart!" And he would walk. You could hear him walk. By the time he got down to the other end of that barracks, you better have that M14 or that M16 field stripped down in the dark. You get down at the end, turn the lights back on, talk to you for a few minutes, let your eyes get back up again, turn that light on, and say, "Put them back together!" You know why? I will tell you why, because you have got to know your weapon. You get out there in a combat situation, and you are in a foxhole in the middle of the night, what are you going to do? When your weapon jammed, you are going to say, "Time out, give me a flashlight?" You have got to be able to take that thing, clear that weapon, take it apart, put it back together, and pitch back blindfolded. That is the way you ought to know the Bible. That is my goal for teaching you the Bible. What do you think I do Thursday night for? What do you think I do Bible Basics for? What do you think I do Bible Institute for? What do you think I come here on Sunday morning and do this for? You think I do this because I just love to beat you up? Yeah, as a matter of fact, I do as I think about it. You have got to learn your weapon! You are no good to me, you are no good to this church, you are no good to God, and you will never take a stand if you cannot clear that jam. Never take a stand to clear that jam. Write that down, I am going to use that. You have got to be able to take it apart, put it back together, know everything, doctrinally, inspirationally, historically, and put it together. You have got to be able to use it. You have got to be able to know what it is capable of. You have got to be able to know what to do with it when you have got to use it. You have got to know what is going on. The Bible says in Hebrews 4:12: Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifested in His life. Seven things in that book and that passage the Bible does for you. But notice, it cuts like a two-edged sword, offense and defense. You have got the offense down great. How about the defense? That is where they will get you. They will lie about you. They will say whatever they are going to say about you. The bottom line is, you know what? Have a good day. That is just the way it is.

- Praying Always Then the next one, praying always. In the Gulf War in 1990, we had a great general then. We do not have many generals today that will like him. He probably was the last of a dying breed. His name was General Schwarzkopf. Stormin' Norman. Norman Schwarzkopf, I knew, heard of him when he was in Vietnam as a company commander, he was a captain back in 1968 and 69. Incredible guy. He had come up through the ranks, come through the military, and he was an old bull crap, he was a lifer all the way through. He did not play well with politics, and he got into the Gulf War. I will tell you what, that war lasted what, four or five days. He put a great plan together. I remember one time CNN asked him after they kicked Saddam all the way back across the desert, they said what he thought of Saddam Hussein. He said, "Well," he said, "I will tell you." He said, "We just kicked his rear end all the way across the desert. We killed 800,000 of his troops who captured another 400,000. We just about decimated everything as, as, as, as great elite guard is wiped out and, and just blown to pieces." He says, "We had a quarter of death. When they tried to escape, we just strafed them with A-10s and just killed about another 100,000 of them." He says, "Other than that, he is one of the greatest military minds I have ever met in my life." You know how they did it? You know what his strategy was? That war was over in the first 15 minutes. Remember the night, the big picture on CNN, when the tracers started going up in Baghdad, and boy, it lit up the sky, everybody remembered that picture? You know how they won that war in such short a time? They dropped special forces and SEAL teams in there long before they ever made the advance. No SEAL teams had marked, and probably many of them were in the desert that night when laser hauled them on those targets. They designated every communication center that they had. Every place where anybody could talk to anybody, they knew where it was. Boy, the first 15 minutes, they all went out just like that. Once they took their communication down, the war was over. They had no way of communicating their orders up to the front to the back. Nobody to tell anybody what they needed and what their situation was. It was absolutely over. Prayer is your line of communication. You do not have it. This battle is over before you get started. It is your communications with headquarters. It is your ability to communicate with God and talk to God and get what God has for you. Bible says pray without ceasing. Pray always, it says here. You notice when you come down here, there is armor for every part of your body except your knees and your back. It says pray without ceasing, but there is no armor on your knees, and there is no armor for the back. You have got everything for the front. You have got the helmet. You have got the sword. You have got the... But there is no armor for the back. You know why that is? Because God's people are never to be in retreat. Do not show them your back. Let them see the blood in your eyes from the front. You are always to be on your knees. This battle is fought on your knees. No armor for the knees. This battle is fought on your knees. Pray always.
- Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace Then we come to the last part. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. 1971. Rule number one, Mel Shabaka. I can hear it when I close my eyes just like I was there. How many times I have heard him yell it. How many times I have heard him scream it. How many times it was burned into my brain. God never sends green troops into combat. "Learn the book," he would say. "Learn the offense. Learn the defense." God never, never sends green troops into combat. He never sends conscientious objectors into the combat zone. God is looking for men and women who

will get their feet shod with a preparation. The preparation, the preparation of the gospel of peace. You have got to have running shoes. You have got to have work shoes. You have got to have combat boots. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Its final analysis is this most simple concept. This church is a training ground, plain and simple. Plain and simple, some make it and some do not. I always say to the new people, very frankly, you ought to look at this thing long before you get into it because I will tell you what, why would you want to go through the abuse of what you have to go through every week to sit under this if you do not have an appetite for it? If you are not military minded in a spiritual sense, and you do not love the smell of napalm in the morning and the sting of battle in your face, you are in the wrong place. You are in the wrong place. You want a women's tea someplace, or you want a cupcake ministry, or a ho-ho, or a twinkie ministry, this is not the place for you. I am here to teach you how to learn the balance. I am here to teach you the balance of offensive and defensive warfare. I am here to take you that weapon and show you how to use it. I am here to show you how to use the offense and use the defense, how to use the breastplate, how to use the shield of faith. I am here to tell you how to fight this battle. So for one purpose only, so you can take a stand. Some of you have never stood for anything in your life except finger to wrong. Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. You need to take advantage of every opportunity to learn every aspect of this ministry to have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, getting prepared. You need to have your running shoes. You need to realize there is an urgency of what we have got to do, and there is a race you have to run. You need to realize that we are in a warfare, and you need to have combat boots because we are in a battle and we are in a warfare, and you need to have work boots with steel toes because there is a work to be done, and people are going to take cheap shots at you every time to try to destroy your credibility and your spirit. So what? I think of that great verse back in the Old Testament when Christ, one of those things that just is in there that if you do not know what you are looking for, you just pass over a million times, but it is the picture of Christ when He is standing looking into the spirit world on the cross of Calvary. I do not know what you know about the cross of Calvary, but boy, that is where the two seeds bang together, Genesis 3:15. Now, boy, is He standing right there, and the Bible says that Jesus says, He looks into that spirit world, and here is what He says. He says, "Whom is my adversary?" He was talking to the devil. The devil had Him betrayed, the devil sold Him out, the devil got everybody infiltrated to 12 with an imposter for the purpose of stabbing Him in the back and doing all the things that he did. Now He is on the cross, He is hanging there, and the devil comes to Him to get Him to quit. You know what His attitude was? His attitude was, "Here I am, you forgot to read, My legs are like marble, I am not moving an inch." He looks right into that spirit world to a face of another spiritual being, and nobody saw it. All anybody sees is Jesus Christ dying on a cross, agony for you and for me. But when you look into that mind, into that spirit world, you see that He is facing another being in the other spirit world, His majesty, the devil. He is looking face to face, and He says to him on the cross in the worst time of His life before He dies, He says, as Isaiah, I think it is 50, He says, "Whom is my adversary? Let him come unto me. Whom is my adversary? Let him come here! I am holding my ground! You want a part of me? Come and get it!" Whom is my adversary? The Bible says He put His face like a flint. He despised the shame. He

despised the beating, and He despised all that they did for Him. You know why? Because He realized that He came down for one reason, and it was not to die for your sins and for mine. He came down for one reason, and it was not really the restoration of the nation of Israel. He came down for one reason, and that was to take a stand in front of the devil. We need to stand. We need to take a stand. We need to take a stand. Learn every aspect of the ministry, offense and defense. Get the Bible down. Learn not only the training, but get the expertise of working with people. Get the education that goes along with it. God has a job for you, and this is the place to get it done. But you need to get your shoes on your feet, staff in your hand, eat it in haste. Then you need to get the armor on, and now you need to get your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

## V. Conclusion: Purging and Preparation of the Heart

I want to give you two verses in closing, and you need to make these your verses because they are great verses. I leave you with this. The first one is in 2 Timothy 2:20. Pick it up in verse 19.

*2 Timothy 2:19-21*

*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.*

*If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

Boy, that is a good verse. You name the name of Christ, then why are you smoking and drinking? You name the name of Christ, going to church, talking about how great it is, the great I Am, why are you doing the things of the world? Why do not you depart from the iniquity like the Bible says? But in a great house, here is why. But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and earth. And some to honor and some to dishonor. Now here it comes, here it comes. You want to stand, you want to get your feet shod, you want to get where you need to be, here it is.

- If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use and prepared for every good work. Look at those things, four things. If a man purge himself from these, the vessels of dishonor, those that talk about Christ, but do not depart from iniquity. Those that talk about naming of Christ, but still have the things of the world in their life. Purge yourself from these vessels of dishonor. If a man will purge himself from these, look at it. He will be a vessel of honor. Sanctified, that is set apart. Meet for the master's use. Meet like help meet, say that thing, like Adam and Eve. She was a help meet. You help meet the need that God wants you to do, like we talked about. And then the last one, and prepared unto every good work.

Now, here is the second verse. Now you want to take this one home with you. Proverbs 16:1. Here it is, here is the secret. Here is the key. I could have just told you this verse this morning,

and we could have went home an hour and a half ago. But if I would not have explained what I have explained, the verse would not mean anything to it. Now it will have a whole new light for you. Feet shod with the preparation of gospel of peace. You see, the first, when you got saved, you got your shoes on your feet. Once you stay through this thing, and you start to grow, now God has got a job for you to do. You have got to get those feet shod with the preparation. The preparation. You get trained, you get taught, then you get educated.

Look what it says.

*Proverbs 16:1*

*The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.*

See that thing? You work at your heart and prepare your heart. You prepare your heart for the things of God. You prepare your heart to take a stand. You prepare your heart to separate yourself from the world. You prepare your heart that when somebody, even if it is your friend, does something wrong, you have the ability and the steel in your backbone to say, "You know what, that was not right." You prepare your heart. You prepare your heart with the Bible. You prepare your heart for the Lord. You prepare the heart. You keep your heart right. You get into that book. You have the right motive. You do it for the right motive. You realize that it is offensive and defensive, and you do everything you do to prepare your heart for the ministry. You do your part, and then when it is time for you to speak, God takes your tongue based on what you prepared and tells you what to say. You see, I cannot get to the second one. All I can do is help you prepare your heart. I do it just like they do paratroopers down at Fort Benning, Fort Bragg. I do it the way soldiers are supposed to be doing. You do not like it, find someplace else to go. I do not know what to tell you. You are not going to like it here.

Somebody said it last four or five years ago, I was preaching someplace. He says, "I did not like what you said this morning." I said, "Well, you stick around here, you are going to like it less before I get through." I am not here to run a popularity contest. I am not here so you will like me or love me, though I hope you do. I am not here to make your friends and influence enemies. I am here for one purpose, and that is to teach, take every man and every woman who has got the steel in their backbone, the gravel in their gut, and he can stand up and have the ability to take a stand for God, and then to train you in an offensive and a defensive warfare. Get your feet shod with a preparation of gospel of peace. My God, people, in any day now, Jesus Christ is coming back. Do you really want to face Him without ever making your stand? Well, that is what it is about. Think about it, that is what it is about. That is the only reason we are here. It will never be a nice day and a nice warm fuzzy feeling. You will never leave here with a nice warm feeling and glow. If you do not leave here every Sunday or every Thursday night not challenging something in your life, then I am not doing my job, and if you do not like that kind of ministry, hey, you know what? There is a church on every street corner. Just start working the list. I am not interested in making you happy or patronizing you. I am not interested in you liking me. I am interested in preaching the truth and taking in these last days some young men and some young ladies that will stand for something that is right. Never had boundary I closed.