

God Gave us Armor Part 3: Readiness

— God at War, Week 14 —

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

I. God's _____ is for _____

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God,
so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers,
against the authorities,
against the powers of this dark world
and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God,
so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground,
and after you have done everything,
to stand.

¹⁴ Stand firm then,
with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,
with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

¹⁵ **and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

II. The _____ of _____ Us in Battle

- This part of armor helps us maintain firm footing in battle. If Paul has Roman equipment in mind (which is likely) this is a reference to the *caligae* worn by Roman soldiers. These half-boot sandals had a thick leather sole with metal hobnails on the bottom for traction. They would be good for marching, as the straps were adjustable to avoid chafing, and they had good ventilation for the hot Mediterranean climate. In colder weather fur could be stuffed inside.

- Paul is saying that we must receive the gospel and let it make us ready for whatever kinds of attacks may come our way. This will enable us to hold ground under enemy assault (Though it is possible that a readiness to advance could also be in view. This is one part of the armor that can also be viewed in an offensive light instead of being only defensive).

- The emphasis seems to be on a readiness *that comes from* the gospel, not so much on a readiness to *communicate* the gospel. Notice Paul does not say "fitted with the readiness to proclaim the gospel."

III. The Gospel of Peace _____ for _____

- So in what sense does the "gospel of peace" make us prepared, ready, and stable in spiritual conflict? To understand Paul's intent, we should probably focus on the term "gospel" itself, then its description as being "of peace."

• "The Gospel"

- "Because church folks today understand 'gospel' more in terms of how to get saved or simply the saving message, it is especially important for us to refocus our energies on the texts that really do define gospel in the New Testament, which themselves are anchored in Isa 40:9; 52:7; 60:6, and especially 61:1. Those texts begin with 1 Cor 15:1-8 (or 15:1-28), the gospel sermons in the book of Acts (2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 10:34-43; 11:4-18; 13:16-41; 14:15-17, and also 7:1-53; 17:22-31), and the stubborn reminder that the first four books of the New Testament were called the Gospels because they are in fact the gospel itself. One should also take a look at the simplest of gospel statements in all of Paul's letters: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel" (2 Tim 2:8). **In short, the gospel of Jesus and the apostles was the announcement that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, the true Lord who saves by making all things right, and that this Messiah lived, died, was raised and exalted, and will come again to establish the eternal kingdom (the new heavens and the new earth)**" (Scot McKnight, *Colossians*, 97).

- Paul mentions the "gospel" three other times in the book of Ephesians: 1:13; 3:6; 6:19. The first of these, and its context (1:11-14) seems to convey especially well how the gospel leads to readiness. Through the gospel, believers are *included in Christ*, the victorious, triumphant Lord. There is no greater a place of stability and spiritual readiness than this.

• "Of Peace"

- This highlights what the gospel accomplishes for us, it brings peace. (note the contrast with the spiritual "war" we are in). Paul mentions peace six other places in Ephesians (1:2; 2:14, 15, 17; 4:3; 6:23).

- Peace between us and God* is the most important way we experience peace (Eph 2:13-20; Rom 5:1-2, 8-10).

- Peace between fellow humans* is the second way we experience peace in the gospel (Eph 2:11-16; 4:3; 2 Cor 13:11; Col 3:15).

- Peace, finally enacted in this spiritually conflicted and broken creation*, is the third way we will experience peace. This will be the enforced peace of a victorious warring king (Eph 1:8-10; Col 1:19-20; Rom 16:20)!

The Bottom Line

_____ on the _____

...by _____ and _____ Christ, the mighty _____.

...by _____ that your _____ with Christ
_____ for sharing in _____.