

Ephesians 6:15-16 by Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 6:15-16:

SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PART 4

by Dr. Wayne Barber

In Ephesians 6:15 Paul says,

"and [having shod](#) (AMPMPN) YOUR [FEET](#) WITH THE [PREPARATION](#) OF THE [GOSPEL](#) OF [PEACE](#)"

The term "[shod](#)" is the Greek word that simply means strapping on your sandals. The Roman soldier wore sandals called *caliga*, which were thickly studded sandals with cleats on the bottom of them. Those cleats were to dig in and stand in the face of battle. That is what the sandals were made for. The verb "having shod" is an aorist middle participle, which means do it on your own accord. Don't need someone else to make you feel guilty if you are not doing it. Do it because Jesus means something to you. Do it because you have a high view of salvation. Do it because God says to do it. That is the only way we are ever to obey—because God said it and out of our love for Him. The word "PREPARATION" gives us the meaning of what he is saying here. What does it mean? The word "preparation" is the Greek word that refers to the basis of something, to the foundation of something, to the firm footing of something. What does this imply? It implies a firm and solid understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what causes me to dig in. When the devil comes at me with all of his deception, I have an understanding and a grasp and am rooted and firmly founded upon what the gospel is. By the way, much of that deception is in the church. Much of that deception comes by the people of the cloth. I have an understanding of that. I have been prepared by that understanding. Then I can stand firm in the midst of all of his deception. In other words, the cleats on the believer's sandals is a firm grasp on what the gospel of

Jesus Christ is all about. It is a gospel of peace (Ed note: click for discussion of "peace").

The book of Colossians 2:6 (note) says,

as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,"

Paul said in [1Corinthians 15:1-5](#) that Jesus died and lived a sinless life. He died, was buried and raised from the dead, ascended and glorified.

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

Yes, that is the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. But the gospel for the person who has received it has a step two. Step two is the living out of that gospel. If I don't understand how I am saved, then I have no clue how I am supposed to live.

There are many people who don't have a firm grasp on what salvation is all about. They have no high view of Christ. They have no high view of salvation. They don't understand when you get saved you are drastically, radically transformed. You are made into a brand new creature. The Holy Spirit of God comes into your life. You can no longer habitually sin and call yourself a believer. You can't live lawlessly, [1John 3:4-10](#) tells us. John writes that...

4 Everyone who **practices** (continually) sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who **sins** (continually, as their habitual practice) has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, let no one **deceive** you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who **practices** (continually) sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God **practices** (continually) sin, because His seed abides in him; and he **cannot** (habitually commit) **sin**, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

There is something uniquely different about us. We were saved by abandoning ourselves. "God, I repent of my ways. I receive you into my heart. I am a sinner. I have missed the mark. God, thank you for what You have done for me." That is the way you live, moment by moment by moment.

There are a lot of people, Paul says who started off in the Spirit and who are now trying to accomplish righteousness in the flesh

"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" ([Galatians 3:3](#))

That is why the whole book of Galatians was written. If you don't have a grasp of salvation, if you don't have a grasp of the gospel of peace (peace meaning to be able to walk in such a relationship that there is nothing in between that causes friction), then you are going to get messed up in warfare. You are going to get off on every tangent you can think of. Having your feet shod means being fully grasped and firmly rooted into an understanding of what the gospel is all about.

Boy, there are a lot of people saying a lot of things about the gospel of Jesus Christ that really causes grief in my own heart. To some people the gospel and receiving the gospel is no more than joining a church. It is something you do and then some day you reap the reward of it. It is like purchasing an insurance policy except that it is a free one. You get a free insurance policy from hell. They think that is all the gospel is about. Folks, we need to rethink what the gospel is. We need to understand from Ephesians what the gospel means. A person who has received it must have a firm grasp of it. Just because a person prays a prayer does not mean he has received the gospel.

Just because a person prays a prayer
does not mean he or she has received the gospel.

What he prays doesn't save him. It is what he knows in his heart and what he expresses in his heart. God knows the heart of a man when he is surrendered to Him. When he is bankrupt, when he recognizes his utter hopelessness and sees what Jesus has done for him, he understands his life compared to what God requires. It is filthy rags. Then he cries out and says,

"Oh, God. Thank you for paying a debt that you didn't owe when I owed a debt that I couldn't pay."

The overwhelming gratitude of that salvation begins to formulate a motive of living day by day for what God has done in a person's life.

You see, there are all kinds of deception in this world. I need to go out first of all with my loins girded with truth. I need to be so committed to truth that I can recognize error and I can be appalled by deceit and recognize when the devil is trying to lie to me, when the devil is trying to send me a message that didn't come from God and didn't come from His word. This will cause me to live a lifestyle of righteousness which will become a breastplate to protect my heart and my motivations in life. Also this will give me a firm grasp and a grip on what salvation is all about, the gospel of peace, how it is received, how it is lived in my life.

I wish sometimes that we could just ask,

"What do you think about the gospel of Jesus Christ?"

and let people stand up and say what they think the gospel of Jesus Christ is.

**It is not only the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus
but how it is received and how it is lived out in the life of a believer.**

It is incredible the misunderstanding of this. I have been saying for years that people who get messed up in warfare are people who do not understand the Christ-life. They do not understand the gospel. They do not understand the high view we ought to have of salvation. They do not understand being transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, taken out of Adam and put into Christ. They don't grasp it. Because they don't grasp it, they are wide open to losing their salvation. They are wide open to every avenue you can think of that will undermine what God could have given them to give them a firm footing in the gospel of peace. We have to have that firm grasp on what the gospel of peace is all about.

Fourthly, in Ephesians 6:16 it says,

"in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

This "[shield of faith](#)" really got my attention. The definite article ("the") is used. It is "the faith". You see in all of the equipment we have seen so far that there is no moveable equipment. In other words, these are immovable pieces that we have put on. Now we come to something that can be moved. It is a weapon, but it is a defensive weapon. It is called the "**shield of faith**". In the King James Version it says, "Above all, taking up the shield of faith." The New American Standard says, "In addition to all." Literally in the Greek it says, "In all." I get the idea from the word "all" that it means in everything, taking up the shield of faith. Perhaps you will see what I am talking about in a minute.

Paul says,

"in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

"Taking up (word study)" is an aorist active participle. It describes a soldier lifting up the shield to defend himself against the things that are coming at him. It describes a soldier taking up a shield and letting that shield protect him from the things that are coming at him. The definite article again is used. Like I said, it is taking up the shield of the faith. Putting it in simple terms, what does that mean? It means everything believed about the faith, the faith being the gospel of Jesus Christ, the faith summarizing all the things we know from God's Word. It is everything believed and everything that is shown to be believed by our obedience to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

HOW DO I TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH?

Now let me explain that to you. The bottom line is how do I take up the shield of faith?

By my willingness to **obey** the gospel which is not just the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It goes all the way through it. All of Scripture is the good news from Christ, what Christ has done for us and how we are to live in Him. When I am willing to **obey** what His Word has to say, that act of **obedience** consistent in my life becomes like a shield to a Roman soldier in a battle. You have to realize this.

OBEDIENCE

If you want to be protected against the deceitfulness of Satan, then like I have said over and over and over again, surrender. Obey. Through that obedience, that loving obedience, that becomes like a shield in the face of the devil's deceit. It is obeying Christ in everything. The shield mentioned is the kind referred to as a "door shield". There were two kinds of shields they used in battle. One was a small shield they would hold up and ward off things but that is not the word that is used here. The word that is used here is **thureos** a different shield. If you have seen pictures of the Roman battles, you probably noticed the huge shields that looked like a door. These shields looked like they had taken a closet door off, put a handle on the back of it and walked out into battle with it. When you look at the door in front of a soldier, you can't even see the soldier. With this kind of shield the soldiers could crouch behind, protected as they marched forward. This large shield would ward off all the **flaming missiles** that were coming at them.

In ancient warfare, the enemy would wrap the arrows with flammable material, dip it in pitch, set it on fire and shoot these flaming arrows at the enemy. Now here is the picture Paul is drawing for us. First, I am to **obey** God. Then when the devil throws his flaming missiles at me, because I have purposed to obey the Lord Jesus at all costs in everything, that obedience becomes like a shield to ward off the flaming missiles coming in, even extinguishing those flaming missiles.

The picture I want you to see is this. It is kind of like Scud missiles in the first Gulf War against Iraq. Those missiles were being randomly launched, without warning. You have got to retain this picture in your mind if you want to be successful in this spiritual war.

Don't misunderstand what Paul is saying. He is not saying that devil personally takes time to come after just you. The devil is one creation and can only be in one place at one time, as we learn from the book of Job where the LORD said to the devil...

"From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." (cf [Job 1:7](#), Torrey's Topic "[The Devil](#)")

If the devil was walking to and fro he cannot be everywhere at all times. God is omnipresent, but the devil is not. The point is that his minions, the demonic forces, are sending "Scud missiles" constantly and yet at random. It is not so much that the devil is coming after me personally. These "flaming missile" thoughts are everywhere in our fallen world. And so everywhere you go the flaming missiles are coming in at all times. There is no time that you can let down. Talk to the veterans of the Vietnam war and the Gulf War. You will find that those on the front line could not let down their guard because they never knew when the missiles might come in. They had to be ready, alert and aware at all times.

In summary then, what is it that protects me?

It is my attitude of obedience.

"God, I am going to obey You regardless of what comes at me."

When that is my attitude, it becomes like a protecting shield. My faith is expressed by my willingness to obey. Don't misunderstand.

**Faith and obedience
Cannot be separated**

What I believe I obey. I show you what I believe by how I live, not by what I say. So that act of obedience becomes like a door shield in front of me and wards off the fiery darts of the enemy.

Let me explain. The fiery darts, the flaming missiles of the evil one, give us a picture of how the devil works in our life. I think **the battle is in the mind**. As we think, so are we. Our enemy is constantly trying to deceive us as John says in the Revelation...

"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who **deceives** (present tense = continually) (Click for word study on deceive) the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." (see note [Revelation 12:9](#)).

He is constantly trying to lead us astray with **wrong thinking**. What would the darts be wrapped up in? To me it would have to be **thoughts** that he is constantly throwing at us. These thoughts are like "Scud missiles" coming into our mind. We can't turn on the television without these "fiery missiles" bombarding our living room. We can't walk into the world without these thoughts bombarding our mind. So as those things are coming in, we must make a conscious choice to adhere to the truth. Then you can recognize the deception and error. Secondly you have to obey the truth that you are adhering to. Your willingness to obey wards off those darts that are coming in.

Friend, listen, you are up against an enemy that wants to get your **mind**.

If he can lock it up and hold it hostage with immoral thoughts, he will do it.

If he can lock it up with anger, he will do it. If he can lock it up with resentment, he will do it.

You've got to make up your mind. Are you going to obey God or are you going to listen and receive the incoming flaming missiles of the evil one? They are randomly shot at all times. They are coming in at all times. Constantly we are being bombarded with those thoughts. Young people, please understand what I am saying. You've got to learn now. You will pay for the wrong choices that you make with consequences. We choose to obey and refuse what those thoughts are coming in, those fiery darts of the wicked one.

The Roman [shield](#) was partially made of leather, and it was soaked in water before they would even go into battle. Why? So it would immediately quench. Have you ever taken a match, licked your fingers and put it out? Get that thought in your mind the next time the devil throws one of them at you. You say, "No way, devil," and just put it out. Just extinguish it right on the spot.

Folks, we have to learn that we are in a war all the time. I guarantee you there are people in the church who have not had their loins girded about with truth. They don't care about the Word of God. They don't even study it. They don't want to study it. They would rather just go out, do something and then ask God to forgive them. They have been deceived by error. They think we can go on and live any way we want, go to church on Sunday and get everything right. No, that practice is not found in the Word of God. These people have believed a lie and what I am saying right now is irritating to them. I'll tell you why it is irritating. Because they don't understand the battle.

You are in a battle all the time. You've got to learn to choose between what is truth and what is deceit in this world. He will throw those things at random. Listen, fire destroys. A flaming missile when it is allowed to lodge, doesn't just inflict a wound. The flame destroys everything in the territory in which it landed. You must remember that. One of the heights of spiritual ignorance is to think you can never fall into temptation. Listen, if you start receiving what the devil is throwing at you and if you are not going to get into the Word of God, if you are just going to play around and do church until Jesus comes back, I want to tell you something, friend, he is going to destroy some things in your life. He will destroy your family. He will destroy relationships.

Friend, if you think this warfare is something that is just a subject to be debated at a seminar, you don't understand what the Christian life is all about. That is why the apostle Paul says,

"Finally, I am going to put it in a context now that you can understand. You had better put that garment on. You are in a war zone."

That garment becomes your weapon against the devil who is throwing them at all times and you never know where it is going to come from. You have to be purposed in your heart to obey Him. You have to have that shield of faith up in front of you.

Now look at what we have seen as a progression so far—a commitment to truth by having our loins girded about with truth, a surrender to Jesus by having put on the breastplate of righteousness, firm footing in the gospel, which means that our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and our obedience to Christ has been purposed in our heart which means now we have taken up the shield of faith.

Folks, we have talked about it for many years. Sometimes it goes right over our heads and we don't understand what we are saying. We are in a war zone and it is a battle for our minds. As a man thinks, so will he also do. God wants to renew your mind. That is why it starts with a total commitment to truth. That is what strengthens us so we can stand in the face of the onslaught of the devil.

WE ARE IN A WAR ZONE AND IT IS A BATTLE FOR OUR MINDS

Friend, you are in a war zone. You were born into the kingdom of darkness. Listen, what is going on in your life? I guarantee you one thing, we have a lot of wounded saints because in battle we let our shield down and receive the flaming darts of the wicked one. You had better make up your mind when you go out tomorrow. They are going to come in like Scud missiles. When I choose to obey Christ, at that moment I am protected from the onslaught of the evil one. The battle is not a power struggle. It is a truth struggle. Am I going to adhere to it or am I not? If I am not, I am going to reap the consequences.

Don't think you are not in a war zone, folks. You had better get serious about it and get serious quick because he is so subtle you don't even see him. He is an invisible enemy, as we will see later on. You can't even see him. He is constantly bombarding your mind with thoughts that are deceptive and will lead you down a path of destruction like you would not believe. When you receive those thoughts, those arrows, they are burning and they destroy everything around the place they have been received. Folks, if we would just get honest, every one of us have received them at times in our life. The damage they have done we all understand. Let's don't ever relax the standard.

Sometimes when I preach, people say I am too hard. Nobody can live it. Listen, folks, none of us have arrived. We are pilgrims

together. But we are never going to water down God's standard. You know why? Because in the book of Ephesians we have been told we can live it. Don't let anybody ever tell you that you can't. If you say you can't, what you are saying is, you won't. God has a standard and has given us His Spirit so that we can conform to that standard. That means righteousness, which we have already studied. That is the armored threads in the garment of the new life.

Aren't you glad He puts the word "mercy" in Scripture? Do you know what that means? It is God's divine ability to bear up under the consequences of stupid choices in your life. I am telling you, when you start realizing what salvation is all about, it will overwhelm you. We have a lot of people with scarred lives. Aren't you glad for the mercy of God that lets tomorrow be the first day of the rest of your life? Don't receive those thoughts.