

Sunday March 26th, 2006

Spiritual Warfare Series part 7

The Gospel of Peace

1). Eph 6:10 ¶ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-*

a). By way of review let us remember that our warfare is against Satan and his fallen angels, the original rulers over the earth, and it is a battle about territory, inheritance and rulership. Since the events of the Garden of Eden, Satan has systematically schemed to overthrow those created to replace him.

b). We will remember that God has provided His armor to protect us in this conflict, and that the armor is put on, ‘finally’ – There is the necessity to come to a degree of maturity in the Spirit before the armor can be put on. It is a spiritual armor and as such exists apart from the flesh - 2Co 10:4 *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,*

c). This is not just maturity in understanding God’s eternal plans and purposes, but also the maturity that comes through the arrangement of our lives in response to that which God has said - Eph 4:1 ¶ *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 ¶ with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

d). We have learned that we are to be ‘strong in the Lord and the power of His might’ and that His strength and might are conditioned upon the exercise of faith and works.

e). The Belt of Truth is demonstrated in an absolute determination to enter the conflict with the certainty of victory based on that which God has said, irrespective of the seemingly overwhelming enormity of the task before us. Exemplified for us in the attitude of Caleb and Joshua at Kadesh Barnea Nu 13:30 *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."*

f). And last week we saw that the Breastplate of Righteousness is put on through a continuous process of righteous acts, faithful obedience brought to its conclusion by works in the same way as we see the wedding garment of Revelation 19:8 made up of the ‘righteous acts of the saints’.

2). It would perhaps be worth noting here that although we see the armor presented to us sequentially in the scripture, it is really not the case that each piece is put on in order.

a). Rather the armor is interdependent and to have on one piece would mean having on all. We either have it on or we don’t. We cannot have some pieces and not others.

b). We can understand this in the same way as we saw in the Book of Ruth with the instruction given to Ruth to wash, anoint, and put on her garment - Ru 3:3 *"Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor;*

Coming sequentially after she had made the journey to Bethlehem and after having worked in Boaz’s field.

c). For us in the antitype of Ruth we realize that we making the journey, working in the field, washing, anointing and putting on our garment all happen concurrently.

d). Each piece of the armor of God is put on concurrently with every other piece. And of course, cannot be separated from the process we have seen in Ruth.

3). Having said that we shall continue to deal with each piece separately in order to give us a fuller understanding.

a). So today we are going to look at our feet being shod with ‘the preparation of the gospel of peace’.

4). As we have seen in our Ephesians 6 scripture we are admonished to stand 3 times and to withstand one time within the space of four verses.

- a). What we would clearly see from this is the absolute necessity of having a sure footing as we brace ourselves against the ‘wiles of the devil’.
- b). Example – ‘Lord of the Rings’, ‘Gladiator’
- c). You can imagine the situation for a one-footed soldier – demonstration (?).

5). We have two feet and our sure footing is to come from having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

- a). Now the word ‘shod’ – Greek word *hupodeo* – can be understood in the sense of binding the foot securely.

- b). And this would work ideally for our understanding.

- c). The word ‘preparation’ – Greek word *hetoimasia* – can be understood to prepare thoroughly and would refer to an internal fitness rather than anything external.

- d). Clearly then we are not dealing with putting anything on our feet but with a securely fastened internal preparedness with respect to the gospel of peace – the good news of peace.

6). And the good news of peace presented to us in scripture comes in two parts, both being essential in relation to our race of faith and our being found worthy at the Judgment Seat.

- a). Hence the picture of our feet and standing.

- b). They declare the coming Day of the Lord when the Prince of Peace will return and establish His Kingdom.

- c). Perhaps it would not be too much of a stretch to see our feet upon the earth, that part of our inheritance over which we will rule, in the same way as God spoke to Abraham - Ge 13:17 "*Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.*"

7). The two parts of the gospel of peace are –

- a). Peace with God

- b). The peace of God

- c). All Christians have peace with God through the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary

- d). Ro 5:1 ¶ *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

- e). But not all Christians have the peace of God.

- f). Ro 5:1 ¶ *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have*

access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

g). And we can see as we follow Romans 5 in to verse two that there is the peace with God that we currently possess and hope, something yet future - Ro 8:24 *For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?*

In relation to the glory of God. Looking forward to the fulfillment of the gospel of the glories of Christ.

h). The peace of God has to do with the hope.

i). And we are to have peace with God and the peace of God if we are to withstand the wiles of the devil.

j). Quite clearly, without peace with God it is impossible to have the peace of God as the message surrounding the 'Hope' is a message only for the saved - Tit 2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

8). Now there are two facets to the 'gospel of peace' that we need in order to have a complete understanding.

a). Let's deal with the first in relation to peace with God.

9). Peace with God as we have seen comes as a result of the free gift of eternal life, and the free gift of imputed righteousness at the point of our spirit salvation.

a). And our eternal security is something that must be absolutely settled.

b). The enormous confusion that exists in respect of salvation is testimony that for many Christians this is not a settled issue. How could we ever have sure footing against our enemy if the foundation is insecure?

c). And would God ever leave something as fundamental as salvation to the vagaries of the thoughts of men?

d). The confusion comes of course through the lack of understanding of the free gift and the reward. Not understanding the full scope of salvation.

e). It is my experience that in the early days of salvation there are doubts as to whether it really happened, or if we did it right. And these doubts are totally eradicated over the course of time as we move towards maturity.

f). And the eradication of these doubts is not based on the opinion of men, but the clear, precise and unequivocal word of God. I know that I have

eternal security, the gift of imputed righteousness and peace with God because of what God has said about it. And so should we all.

g). What level of maturity can any Christian have if the basic issue of the free gift is not settled.

h). Ro 5:18 *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*

i). Eph 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*

10). To have the peace of God requires a level of spiritual maturity as it comes as a result of faithful obedience as we comply with the instructions given to us in Philippians 4 concerning proper Christian living in God's sight.

a). Php 4:1 ¶ *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. 2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

b). Please notice the process

i/ Rejoice in the Lord – how often? – always

ii/ This goes beyond rejoicing over the free gift to rejoicing in that which the free gift has made possible. Rejoicing not just in what we presently possess in this age, but what is promised in the age to come. Notice the reference in verse 1 to 'my joy and crown'.

iii/ That which God has promised should give us constant cause for rejoicing despite our circumstances - 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 ¶ **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,***

iv/ Rejoice – Greek word – *agalliao* – to leap, to jump for joy.

c). Our ‘gentleness’ – Greek word - *epieikes* – patient, meek, well-balanced behaviour to be known to all men.

d). We are to be ‘anxious for nothing’

i/ ‘Anxious’ – Greek word- *merimnao* – to take thought of. The root of this word has the idea to disunite, divide, share, through the idea of distraction.

ii/ The thought is that we are not to become distracted by situations, circumstances and people so that we lose our focus. We are to let nothing consume us to that extent - Jas 1:7 *For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

iii/ We are to keep our eyes fixed on the prize that is before us. We are to be looking to the recompense of the reward. We are to be focused on our inheritance in the land of our calling. Jesus said to us in - Lu 9:62 *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*
(Looking back – being distracted)

iv/ Mt 6:27 *"Which of you by worrying (merimnao) can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry (merimnao) about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, (merimnao) saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

v/ This is the same thing Jesus warned about in the parable of the sower in respect to the word of the kingdom - Mt 13:22 *"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.*

vi/ And this is a wile of the devil – to absorb us so completely in the cares of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches that we fail to produce fruit / we lose our footing / we are overcome.

vii/ We must never allow a circumstance or a situation or a relationship to absorb us so completely that we lose sight of the reward of the inheritance.

e). Instead - *in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*

i/ Prayer = request with regards to an ongoing situation

ii/ Supplication = in the sense of an urgent need

iii/ Thanksgiving = an expression of gratitude often as worship.

f). If we do all of this we will have the peace of God - *and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

i/ 'Surpasses' – Greek word – *huperecho* – superior in all ways imaginable

ii/ 'Guard' Greek word – *phroureo* – garrison, as in the sense of manning a fortress

11). If, having the gospel of peace with God firmly in place we then follow the instructions of Philippians 4:1-7 we will have a firm footing. We will be able to stand and withstand against the enemy of our soul. Because of our faith he will not be able to undermine us. Our trust and our hope and our focus will be in the Lord, not in our circumstances, our situation or our relationships.

12). And so to the second facet of this picture to complete our understanding. This we will find in a companion scripture to Ephesians 6:15 Ro 10:15b... *As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*
A quotation from - Isa 52:7 ¶ *How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

13). Not only are we to be thoroughly settled in our understanding of peace with God and the peace of God, but we should also be able to share this with others.

a). In respect of peace with God everyone of us, who have been here from the beginning should be able to stand on this stage and prove from the scriptures, both NT and OT the absolute certainty of our eternal security.

b). If we are not able to present this proof then two things should be said – firstly, 'shame on us', and secondly it is way past time for us to grow up sufficiently to be able to do so.

c). If we do not have in place the foundation of the scriptures how will we share the gospel of grace to the lost? - 1Co 15:3 *For I delivered to you*

first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

c). For if we do not have this foundation in the scriptures then our footing is uncertain and we may not be able to stand.

14). And in respect of the peace of God, knowing that this is an integral part of Kingdom focused living, what does the scripture say?

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

a). And what reason for the hope that is in us could we give other than the authoritative truth of the God breathed scriptures.

15). Our challenge today as we look to having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace is firstly, do we have both parts of this gospel firmly in place? And secondly, can we, from the scriptures, share this gospel with others?

a). Our response to the challenge in both parts needs to be, 'Yes'.

b). And if not then we need to thank God for revealing this to us and determine even now what we will do to rectify this situation.

c). Our seeking of the Kingdom and our engagement with the scriptures is neither frivolous nor casual – it must be sober minded, determined and wholehearted.

d). Let us look to the admonition given to us in - *Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*

e). And let us determine this will not be said of us, but rather we will follow the exhortation given to Timothy - *2Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

f). *Song 7:1 ¶ THE BELOVED How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!*

16). Take off shoes, come to the altar, declare our determination, go back and put on shoes.