

**Discussion Starter #1:** What do we mean when we use the term “Gospel”?

**Key Passage:** “Stand, therefore...having put on...shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.” (Eph.6:14-15a)

### TEACHING POINT

# #1

The “peace shoes” that God supplies His soldiers have two purposes: defensive and offensive.

The word “*readiness*” (v.15) implies constant alertness. A victorious soldier has to be ready for battle at all times. He had to have studied his enemy’s strategy, be confident in his own strategy, and have his feet firmly planted so that he could hold his ground when the attacks came. A soldier’s battle shoes were studded with nails or spikes, like cleats, to help him keep his balance in combat. He knew that if he lost his footing and went down, the rest of his armor would be rendered useless; the enemy would have the advantage over him. Being ready with the gospel of peace means we live with the understanding that we are continually under attack from Satan. 2 Timothy 4:2 says to “*be ready in season and out of season.*”

The “*gospel of peace*” (v.15) is the message that Jesus gave to those who trust in Him (Jn.14:27). It comes with the assurance from God that we are His children, and nothing can snatch us out of His hands (Jn.10:28-29). It outlines clearly what is required to become a child of God (Rom.10:9-10). Any other message is a false gospel (Gal.1:6).

**Defense** – The Christian soldier’s shoes are for defense. We must have sure-footed confidence of our position in Christ and stand firm in the truth of God’s Word, regardless of how terrifying the circumstances or satanic attacks may be (1 Jn.5:14).

**Offense** – The Christian soldier’s shoes are also for offense—for mobility. God expects us to go on the offensive and take the gospel of peace to others. Matthew 28:19 says, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...*” The first two letters of gospel are “g-o” and the first three letters of Satan are “s-a-t”! 1 Peter 3:15 says, “*Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.*” Sharing our faith is one of the best ways to maintain our own stability and mobility. When we are actively speaking of God to others, we are charging into Satan’s territory and digging our shoes more deeply into truth, and we’ll be much harder to dislodge.

### TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think readiness is so important when it comes to sharing the Gospel?
- What are 2-3 questions you think Christians should be prepared to answer from non-Christians about Christianity?

## TEACHING POINT

# #2

The Gospel message, for which we are given shoes to mobilize us to proclaim, has three essential elements.

The word gospel means “good news”—it is God’s rescue plan of redemption for those who will trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ in order to be reconciled to God. The essential content of this saving message is clearly laid out for us in the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, the apostle Paul presents the content of the gospel message, *“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word 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 in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”*

In these verses, we see three essential elements of the gospel message.

- 1. All people are sinners.** The phrase *“died for our sins”* (v.3) is very important. Romans 3:23 tells us, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* The reality of sin needs to be acknowledged by all who come to God for salvation. A sinner must acknowledge the hopelessness of his guilt before God for forgiveness to take place, and he must understand that the *“wages of sin is death”* (Rom.6:23). Without this foundational truth, no gospel presentation is complete.
- 2. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins.** Jesus is both God (Col.2:9) and man (Jn.1:14). Jesus lived the sinless life that we could never live (1 Pet.2:22), and this qualified Jesus alone to die a substitutionary death for all sinners. Sin against an infinite God requires an infinite sacrifice. Therefore, either man, who is finite, must pay the penalty for an infinite length of time in hell, or the infinite Christ must pay for it once. Jesus went to the cross to pay the debt we owe to God for our sin. *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”* (Eph.1:7).
- 3. The resurrection of Christ provides eternal life for those who follow Him.** The resurrection is proof of God’s power (Rom.1:4). Only He who created life can resurrect it after death, only He can reverse death’s curse, and only He can remove death’s sting and the grave’s victory (1 Cor.15:54–55). Unlike every other religion, Christianity alone possesses a Founder who conquered death and who promises that His followers will do the same. All other religions were founded by men and prophets whose died and stayed dead.

## TALK ABOUT IT:

- Based upon the three essential elements of the gospel message mentioned above, why is it important to understand that Christ offers His salvation as a free gift (Rom.6:23), that can only be received by faith, apart from any works or merit on our part (Eph.2:8–9)?

## TEACHING POINT

# #3

The fact that God provides shoes so we can be ready to spread the gospel implies that we are not to be ashamed of the gospel message.

In Romans 1, Paul addressed the Gentile believers at Rome and begins by explaining his mission, which was to preach the gospel to everyone. He concludes his explanation by saying, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Rom.1:16)

According to Webster’s Dictionary, one of the definitions of “ashamed” is “feeling humiliated or embarrassed.” Paul made it clear that he was not embarrassed by the Gospel of Christ and maintained that *“to live is Christ, and to die is gain”* (Php1:21).

As our culture grows increasingly colder and more hostile toward Christianity, we must not let ridicule and hatred to weaken our determination to preach Christ. In the midst of persecution and under threat of their lives, Peter and John said to their persecutors: *“But Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard’”* (Acts 4:19-20).

Jesus reminded us that the world would hate us and *“that it hated me before it hated you”* (Jn.15:18). He also warned us that *“but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven”* (Mat.10:33).

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul pointed out that we should speak, *“not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts”* (I Thess.2:4). He also exhorted us to seek God’s approval when he asked the probing question, *“Am I now seeking the approval of or of God?”* (Gal.1:10).

We can place our confidence in the gospel just as Paul did, and allow the “shoes of the gospel” to carry us along as we share Christ with others. We can proclaim with boldness the truths that God has revealed in His Word, with no fear that our confidence is misplaced. *“Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame”* (Rom.10:11).

## TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think some Christians might feel embarrassed to share the gospel with others?
- How can we make sure that we are pleasing God and not people in the way we share the gospel?
- What have you found to be your most effective way to share the gospel with others?
- Paul refers to the *“gospel of peace”* (Eph.6:15). How does the fact that you are at peace with God (Rom.5:1) give you courage to share your faith with others?