

ARMED WITH THE GOSPEL AND FAITH

(Ephesians 6:15-16)

As soldiers of Christ, we must be realistically optimistic. On the one hand, we must be optimistic and never lose faith in the end of God's redemptive story. In the end, our Lord Jesus wins and we win with Him! But while waiting for that glorious end, we must be realistic and confront the brutal fact that right now we're still the church militant waging war against Satan and his evil forces (Ephesians 6:11-12). The good news is that God does not send us into this spiritual conflict ill equipped for the battle. The Lord has supplied and provided us with the complete and full armor of God. **Since we are armed and equipped with the gospel and the shield of faith, we can stand firm against the devil and live in the triumph of Christ.** As we look at Ephesians 6:15-16, we will consider the next two equipment of the believer's spiritual armor.

1. Stand firm against the devil equipped with the _____.

In the Christian's battle against Satan and his evil forces, our spiritual footwear is critically important. In the language of Paul, we are called to stand having shod our feet with the readiness given by the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). The term readiness carries the idea of preparedness, promptness, firmness and stability. Paul tells us that the gospel of peace provides us with firm footing, stable ground and spiritual readiness in our battle with the devil. The gospel proclaims the victory of Jesus and it announces the defeat of Satan. Christ has brought about the decisive defeat of the devil when He died on the Cross for our sins and rose from the grave to set us free us from the dominion of Satan, the grip of sin and the power of death (Colossians 1:13-14; 2:13-15). This gospel which brings about the defeat of Satan has brought us peace with God, full reconciliation and harmonious relationship with the Lord (Ephesians 6:15; 2:13-14; Romans 5:1; 8:39). It is this gospel of peace that we must readily proclaim to others so that they might enjoy that same saving peace of Christ (Romans 1:15-16).

2. Stand firm against the devil equipped with the _____.

If we are to stand firm against the evil one, we must regularly take up the shield of faith in all circumstances (Ephesians 6:16; 1 Peter 5:8; Hebrews 11:6). As the shield protects a soldier in combat, so also faith spiritually protects us from the flaming darts of the evil one. These fiery arrows of Satan represent every type of assault including the devil's persistent accusations, temptations, unholy thoughts, sinful doubts, fear, despair, discouragement, discontentment, persecutions, false teachings, fractured relationships, sexual lust, worry, envy and pride, all of which are meant to consume us and ultimately lead us to abandon our faith in the Lord (Genesis 3:1-7; Job 9:21-22; 1 Kings 19:1-18; Revelation 2:10; 2 Samuel 11). Whatever form of Satanic attack it could be, God has equipped us with the shield of faith which pertains to active trust and genuine confidence in God (Ephesians 1:15; 2:8; 3:12,17). Faith points us to our Lord's personal attributes, precious promises and preserving prayer (Psalm 28:7; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 4:20-21; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:18; Jude 1:24; Luke 22:31-32). As we trust in the Lord with our faith anchored in His gospel, God will empower us to put out the flaming darts of the evil one and stand firm in the victory of Christ!
