

Message Transcript

SHOES OF PEACE | EQUIP FOR BATTLE

RYAN BRAMLETT | JUNE 15, 2025

Traders Point how are we doing? So good to be with you—everyone across all of the campuses, online—welcome.

Let's just start this off for every father in the room. Happy Father's Day to all of you. Can we celebrate our Dads? Spiritual fathers, all of it. Incredible.

And I just want to speak to two things that maybe you've noticed already. One, there is a scar on my forehead. It is a Father's Day scar. I got it last night. Every night when I'm putting my daughter to bed, my wife will stand upstairs (and our upstairs, and downstairs you can kind of see down) so she'll throw her milk down from the top. And I'll catch it.

Ninety-nine percent of the time I will catch that milk. I'm not blaming her, but it wasn't a good throw. She goes to throw but she just dropped it, and it hit the banister, and it comes at me at about 1,000 miles an hour. I take this cup of milk to the forehead, blood going everywhere. But it is a reminder of what it means to be a dad and a father in our houses. Right? I'm tough. Kind of.

The second thing you will maybe notice is that we've been promoting a guest speaker her today, Pastor Greg, and I am not he. My man had an amazing message prepared, a life message, and one day I believe that we will get to hear that from him, but he got stuck in Atlanta last night. So, surprise.

But hear me when I say this. I believe that God is going to use this moment in time, these verses, this Scripture to speak to you and for you to have an encounter with God, if you are ready. Are you guys ready for that? Me too. So, we're just going to continue in this series that we've been in called Battle Ready where we've been unrolling this refreshed Mission Statement:

Clear the Way

Equip for Battle

Deploy for Impact



We want to clear the way to get people to Jesus. And we want to equip for battle, and we want to be deployed for impact. And some of you are like, "This is really strong language. Like, what battle? Where? I'm an accountant. I sit in a cubicle. I don't know if I'm ready for a battle. What are you talking about?" Well, the Bible tells us over and over again that we live in a war zone. And unless we come to terms with that, that there is a real enemy and a real war that we are in the midst of, we're always going to have an incomplete or even defective worldview—just something that will make sense to us of everything that we are seeing.

This is language that is used over and over again in the Bible: war and battle. And Jesus came to prepare us for this. It's a term that was used over and over again, even in the New Testament. There is a war. There is God's army. And you and I have been enlisted into it. And do you know the title He has given me and you? Soldier. What a title.

Some of you are like, "I didn't sign up for soldier. I signed up for son or daughter. I signed up for streets of gold. I signed up for the good life." That is a part of it. Right here in the middle—this is what it means right now to follow Jesus. There is a war and there is a battle and God believes in you and me so much that He has charged us, He's enlisted us, to follow His orders and to bring His Kingdom to earth.

There is this language that is used over and over again, look at 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 3:

"Endure suffering along with me as a good," say it with me, "soldier of Christ Jesus. Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for they cannot please the officer who enlisted them." (NLT)

Who enlisted them? Who enlisted us? Jesus. He's the commander. We are the soldiers. And we can't get caught up in the affairs of civilians pleasing ourselves, pleasing the world.

No, no. You have a commander. You have a role as a soldier. And it's not like a metaphor to explain what the Christian life is. It was a term that was shared between one another in the early church. Look at Philemon, chapter 1, verse 2. It says:

"...and to Apphia, our sister, and to Archippus, our fellow soldier and to the church in your house." (NLT)

Our fellow soldiers, even the way that they related to one another, they saw each other as soldiers in battle, being equipped. You just feel a kind of urgency and weight to it whenever you begin to see, "Okay, how was the early church talked about? How did they see their mission?"



Do you see yourself as a soldier? "No, not really. But now that you mention it, my life would actually make a lot more sense if you told me I was in the middle of a war. It feels like I get attacked all of the time. It feels like I want to do all of this over here but I'm constantly facing opposition. It feels like I am at war." And I just want to tell you today it's because you are at war. And if we're not careful, if we don't stay close to Jesus in the midst of this war we can get confused and we won't know who the enemy is—the real one.

Ephesians 6 has been telling us that the enemy isn't one another. It's not your neighbor. It's not the one who believes in something different than you. The enemy isn't flesh and blood at all. Look at Ephesians, chapter 6, starting in verse 12. It says:

"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." (NLT)

There is an enemy and it's not your neighbor on the other side, it's an invisible enemy that you can't see, a power of darkness that is beyond anything you or I can stand against.

But at the same time, we're instructed in Ephesians, chapter 6, that we are not standing alone, that followers of Jesus have been empowered, filled with the Spirit of God. And at the same time God has graciously given you and me the complete armor of God. Everything that we need to stand against both the seen and unseen God has provided for us. That's what we have.

Everything the enemy is trying to do is to get us to step away from our heavenly Father. He can't force us out, but he can disturb our peace. He can get us to think twice about what God really said. He can find the cracks (if there are any) in our armor or if we decide not to put on the armor at all. But that's what you and I need to be prepared for. That's the battle we are equipping for.

And I don't know about you, but I read verses like that. It's not just like this unorganized thing, there are authorities and powers and governing bodies, and spiritual darkness. They have strategy. They are training for this moment. And if they are training for it, then we need to be training harder.

I love the way Pastor and author John Tyson talks about this. He recounts this moment with Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was this incredible man of God: pastor, prophet, spy in Natzie Germany who was really wrestling with, "What does it mean for me to go against this kind of evil? What does it mean to be a Christian in this season?"



And one of the things he does is he begins to develop this kind of training ground, building up the next generation of followers of Jesus. And it's pretty intense. And his friends hear about it, and they are like, "Bro, is this necessary? Don't you think you need to chill out? Word is getting back. I think you are taking this a little too far."

And one of his friends actually goes and visits him. And he's telling him, "Is this really necessary? Don't you want to just come back home?" And the story goes that Bonhoeffer takes his friend down and then they go up this mountain and they look off into the distance. Miles and miles away you could see the Nazis, you could see their planes landing in perfect formation, you could see thousands of them—they looked like ants—moving strategically. And he has this incredible thought where he says, "Hey, what we're doing here has to be greater than that."

What I want for us to hear today is that what we are doing here, we are not playing church. What we are doing in here has to be greater than what the devil and his demons are doing out there. The world is being filled and manipulated by the dark powers in the unseen world. The church has to prevail against it. There are people in this world who are being taken advantage of by evil spirits and led into darkness. You and I have to be filled with the Holy Spirit to stand against everything that is coming our way, leading people out of the darkness and into the light. That's what we are here for. The Spirit of God is greater. Here's the thing. We've already been given everything we need to win this battle. That's been what we've been looking at in Ephesians 6. All of this is a gift. All of the armor of God was freely given. This is how good our Father in heaven is. He gives graciously. He gives freely: grace, salvation it is all ours. What we have to do is to make the decision. Do we accept it?

And with the armor of God we also get the choice—are we going to put it on? He provides it, but it's useless unless every single day we put this on item by item, all of it. So that we can be able to withstand all of the attacks of the devil. That's what we are seeing. We have to put it on.

And here's what we learned last week as we were talking about what this armor is. It's not getting caught up in each individual item, but really why it's being given. And here's what we came down to:..

The Armor of God is specifically designed to defend us against the strategies of the devil



So, God is going to tell us, "Hey, I need you to put on all of the armor. It's My armor. You are going against a real enemy and it's darkness. It's going to be heavy. And they hit hard. But I'm giving you everything that you need to be victorious."

And there is something about each piece that tells us how the enemy is going to attack us. So, for example, if I told you, "Hey, we're about to go outside. Put this bullet proof vest on." Why am I telling you that? What could we face outside? Guns. Bullets. And your flesh is not strong enough to stop a speeding bullet, so put this on.

Firefighters, why do they wear the gear that they do? To protect them from the threat that they are going to face: fire and smoke.

In the same way, God has given His armor to us to show us the strategies of the devil saying, "Hey, this is how he's going to attack you. I know every play. Put this on so that you can protect yourself."

So, last week we looked out, "Hey, if God says I need His truth, it means we are going to be attacked with some lies. If my righteousness is going to be attacked, I'm going to need the armor of God's righteousness because mine is not going to be enough."

So, I want you to hold onto that logic as we read through the whole armor of God. Okay? So, Ephesians, chapter 6. Hopefully, you've had time to get there—verse 13:

"Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness.

"For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (NLT)

So, today, out of all of that armor that God has given each and every one of us who have confessed the name of Jesus as Lord and Savior (that is yours) I just want to grab the next piece. In all of the armor, we are really going to home in on the peace of God. If I need God's peace, that means that my peace is going to be attacked. And let's just throw it out there. Hypothetically, anyone struggling with having peace in this season? Anyone desiring peace? Anyone want it but it seems to be just outside of your reach?



Maybe you want peace relationally, whether it's with your spouse, or with a friend who you are just not connecting with in this moment. You wish you had peace.

Maybe you wish you had peace with God, Himself. Maybe you wish you had peace at work or a decision of what you are going to do. This is the kind of peace that Paul is talking about here, a peace that surpasses all understanding. A peace that can only come from God. That's the item that we are going to look at.

So, I just want to take all of it out and I just want us to home in on verse 15. And we're going to read it together. Okay? Let's look at each single word in this verse. It says:

"For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared."

The shoes of peace is what it says. Paul was selling shoes way before Nike or Converse or any of the others. But he's using the same strategy. You need these shoes.

Do you remember shoe commercials in the 80s and 90s, the culture around what shoes were going to be able to do for you? You've got to get these shoes. You will run faster, jump higher, you will become just like your favorite athlete for just one hundred nineteen dollars and twenty-three cents.

And listen, I needed those shoes. As someone who looked like Rudy growing up, I needed all of the help I could get—five-foot nothing, 100 pounds and nothing, "I'm going to need two pairs of those over there because I need to be a little bit faster. I need to jump a little bit higher."

And I can stand here with a straight face, with complete confidence, to tell you I bought many a shoe back in the day. They did not help me run faster or jump higher.

Do you remember the Reebok Pumps? For those who missed, they were a pair of shoes that we believed in: you buy them, you put them on, you tie them up and then you pump them. There was a little thing at the front, and you just pumped it up. And after about 10 pumps, maybe 20 if you are feeling crazy, you were going to be able to run faster and jump higher.

Do you remember Jordans? You believed that if you could just get the next pair of Jordans you would be able to do things that you'd never been able to do before. And it did not help. You looked better, which helped. Alright? But it didn't necessarily translate to what you were wearing.



Do you remember Sandlot? All they needed was the PF Flyers. If you put those shoes on you would be able to outrun a demonic dog. Thinking about things from hell, that dog...

We believed that we just needed some better shoes.

But Paul is actually, for the first time in history, providing a pair of shoes that don't just over promise and under deliver. He's saying there is something about these shoes that if you put these on you will have peace.

There's actually even more of a point. The object of this sentence isn't necessarily on the shoes. In a different translation it really paints this better for us, what Paul is getting to with these shoes. Look at how the ESV translates this sentence. It says:

"And, as for shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace."

It's in the readiness. If you have a Bible, I would highlight that: readiness or fully prepared if you going through the NLT.

Shoes were a big deal. And Paul, at this time, is probably chained to a Roman soldier. That is his inspiration for writing this letter. He's like, "These guys are well put together. We need something like this, but not in a physical way, in the spiritual."

The Roman soldiers were known for their shoes, for their sandals. Even historians give a lot of credit to the way Alexander the Great was able to move so fast to conquer so many people. It was in the footwear. If they were to have commercials, they would have sold out of these sandals. They had these giant spikes in them that would allow them to be mobile and agile. And they would get places. They would sneak up on people.

The Roman soldiers had a readiness, an ability to move, a nimbleness. And Paul is saying that kind of readiness that they had, we need to have it spiritually. It's like spiritual athleticism, quick feet. You have that? Are you able, no matter what comes, no matter how you get hit, no matter what situation you find yourself in, do you have an ability to be sure footed?

Or do you find yourself constantly getting hit and losing your peace, falling down and feeling like you're starting all over again? Do you feel like you're a victim to life circumstances?



I know I've been in those situations where I thought I had a plan. I thought I knew what was happening. And then something hit me, and surprised me, and I was shook.

I remember once I was going out on a date with my wife. It wasn't like an anniversary or anything. It was just a regular date. I'm saying that to give you a little bit of context because I'm going to tell you where, we were at Chick-fil-A. We were going to Chick-fil-A. If you've never had it before, it's a local chicken spot you should check it out. It's great. Closed today, but tomorrow you can go get some.

I pulled into a parking spot. I hopped out of the car. I gave a little stretch. You know? I'm standing there and within seconds, I closed the door, I stretched, my arms are up, and I felt someone reach around me and start tickling my stomach. And I'm like, "Babe, in this Chick-fil-A parking lot it's a little much."

I look down, though, and it's not the sweet hands of my wife, harry knuckles are wrapped around me tickling me, kind of like violently. I'm like, "Who is this?" And I took a , and I turned around, and I came face to face with a guy who has just made a horrible mistake.

He said, "Oh, my gosh. I thought you were someone else." I said, "Bro, you need to be 120 percent sure before you go around tickling people in a Chick-fil-A parking lot. And I'm staring at him and he's staring at me. I'm like, "What do we do from here?" And he walked away, quietly, backwards. And I just waited for my wife to come save me.

But in that moment I was shook. I had no response to that. I was not prepared to be tickled by another grown man in a parking lot. I didn't have an answer. I was not surefooted. I didn't know what to believe anymore. What was real? For a lot of us, when a surprise comes, when something comes to steal our peace it doesn't feel like getting tickled from some fella in a parking lot. It feels and it looks like when you find out your spouse is having an affair. You felt so sure. You felt so confident in your relationship and now it seems like in a moment's time all of that peace you had with the person you were going to spend the rest of your life with is gone.

Others of you had this peace. And you thought everything was going well and you went to the doctor just for a routine check-up. And he said, "Hey, we're seeing some things that we are not too sure about." And then a week later you're sitting with this diagnosis of cancer, and you are like, "I thought I had peace. Now I'm so unsure."



You thought it would be the job. You had so much security and so much promise and then you're walking out with your box. And you are like, "How did I get here? I thought I had peace and now it's gone."

"I thought my life was planned out. I was going to go to that school and study that thing, but I didn't get in. I got rejected. What do I do now? Where did that peace go?"

There are so many trials, there are so many challenges that come into our life that try to steal our peace. And I'm telling you; God is saying that we need to put on peace.

The devil is going to try to steal your peace

That tells us the devil is going to try to steal your peace. The devil is going to try to steal my peace. And as we kind of put our lives together we need to be very careful of what we're building on and what we are looking to provide peace for us.

Hear me when I say this. I'm not saying that everything that is bad that happens to you comes from the devil. I'm not that superstitious. But I am more like Michael Scott. I'm a little suspicious. Okay? Not superstitious but I'm a little suspicious.

And I do think that there is an enemy behind things pulling strings trying to take away our peace. And that's something we need to be aware of. There are two pitfalls that we can fall in: accrediting him with everything and not taking responsibility but at the same time minimizing who he is and the great force that he is to be reckoned with.

We need to be mindful. Is this from the devil? And if so, what does that tell me about how I need to respond?

And I think from Scripture you'll see that this mystery of the devil is kind of uncomfortable, what we don't know but even more uncomfortable about what we do know of how he can attack us—the lengths that God allows him to go to to steal our peace.

This kind of plays out in the book of Job in the Old Testament. Job is this guy who is living his life, and he has a very good life. God has been good to him, given him lots and lots of gifts.



And one day the devil be deviling and he goes up to God and he says, "Hey, you think Job loves You. Job doesn't love You. Job loves what You've given him. Job loves the land and the crops and the family. If you took away the blessings that You've given Job, You'll see pretty quickly that he will curse you. He will forget You. He doesn't love You."

And God says, "Let's find out. No, no. Go ahead." And then God gives the devil parameters. He says, "Hey, you're allowed to attack Job. You can take things from Job." He tells him what he can do and what he can't do.

And we see throughout this that the devil is able to do a lot. He's able to send violent people to attack Job's family. He's able to send destructive weather that causes pain and death to his family. He even sends a physical affliction—these sores that go all the way from Job's head to his toes. The devil has a lot of power, and he can control a lot of things.

And we also have to wrestle with this. God allowed that to happen. And we see throughout this that the devil attacks and attacks and attacks. It's not easy for Job. It's hard. And he wrestles and he has doubts and he questions and he's having these conversations with his friends.

He finally gets to the end of it, and he has this moment with God where he gets to talk with God and he realizes, "I do love God. Yes, all of the gifts. They were great and I loved them. I treasured them. But they were gifts from a good, heavenly Father." And he comes to this realization. "The devil can take everything from me, every piece of land, every bit of livestock, even my family itself. But he cannot take God, so I have more than enough."

No longer does he have this question of, "Is it really God or is it these other things? He's brought down this space that God uses, that He works all things together for the good of those who love Him."

So, He has a plan. He allowed the devil to do this because of what He is developing—there is spiritual formation. He's showing him that, "Hey, you need to know, not just theoretically, not just in your head, you need to be able to experience that I Am enough." That's what he gave to Job.

And sometimes maybe you're in a season where you are feeling that too. And you are like, "I don't want to be Job." No one wants to be Job, until the end. Until you get to have that moment with God where you realize that this is the God who spoke the universe into existence. This is the One who stretched it and pulled the fabric together. This is the One who created me in His image. This is the One who spoke the universe into existence and is now speaking to me. Yeah, that will be enough for me."



And he says, "Put that on. Put on that kind of peace."
What do you feel you need to put on to experience peace?

What is it for you? What do you feel you need to put on to experience peace? Because God is offering perfect peace. And a lot of times we're like, "Yeah, but what else can we get? What would really bring me peace?" Paul says it's only the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's only being in right standing with God. But we're like, "Uh, I think I'm close. I think I could have peace outside of that."

Do you know what the most common response is? About 10 percent more. I'm about 10 percent away from experiencing peace. If I could just have 10 percent more in my paycheck... If my relationships could be 10 percent better... If my health would be about 10 percent better... I'm so close. I'm just a day, a week away. And we continue to chase after that carrot.

I just want to ask you this. How is that going for you? That thing that you think you will put on and you will experience peace, is it kind of a crazy thing that always seems to elude you? Does it feel like once you get it there is just a timer that is about to go off again before you lose it?

Is that a coincidence? I don't think so. I think God is showing us, revealing to us, the hard way that, "Whatever you build your life on, whatever you try to find peace and safety and comfort in, if it's not Me it can slip through your hands. It will provide a cheap substitute for what I came to bring, which is the real thing." And I want you to see the kind of peace that God offers you today. Look at this in Philippians, chapter 4, versus 6 and 7. It says:

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." Look at this, "Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." (NLT)

This is what God came to give you today. We are often so quick to settle for cheap peace. And God is saying, "I want to give you a peace that exceeds any kind of understanding. You will have peace when it doesn't make any sense. You will have peace in the midst of loss. You will have peace in the midst of sadness."

You will have peace in the midst of loss because you will have peace that is not from this world, it cannot be taken by this world. It is a peace that is rooted and found in Christ Jesus and Jesus alone. You have peace.



It doesn't mean that God is going to keep you in peaceful situations. It means you can be sad and have peace at the same time. You can be joyful and have peace at the same time. You can experience loss and experience peace at the same time because you know what God gave you the world can't take. We have that kind of peace. It's a different kind of peace.

When we think of peace we think, I think, of a worldly idea of peace. It's like a private island somewhere. We're getting away from the noise. Then we can just kind of avoid it all together. Give me a space of peace. But that's not the way that the Bible talks about peace. The Bible uses the word: Shalom

That's a very different kind of peace. This isn't peace that you try to step into and find it over here, you have to leave a situation. Shalom carries this idea, the biblical word, that means I'm bringing peace. I'm not looking for perfect. I'm coming to make this situation whole. This space is fractured and broken, but I'm bringing the peace of God that brings wholeness and restoration to the situation.

So, when he's talking about putting these shoes on, he's not saying, "Put these on and run from the problems of the world." He's saying, "I want you to put these on because you're not only going to experience peace that surpasses all understanding; you're going to bring peace with you everywhere you go." The way the Bible talks about this—Jesus, Himself, uses this term: Peacemaker

That's who we call, "Blessed are the peacemakers." But I think sometimes we get confused. We have:

Peacekeepers versus Peacemakers

We have peacekeepers and we have peacemakers. And so many of us are great peacekeepers. I struggle with it. I just want to keep the peace. I'll be quiet. I won't say anything. Whatever is best for you. Let's just put it over here. Sweep it under the rug. I don't even see it. No, no. I won't mention it again. It's fine. It's not a big deal. What do I have to do? How do I have to shrink in this situation so that we can make room for peace?"

Anybody living like that? That is not the life God has called you to. That is not why He gave you the shoes of peace. Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew, "Blessed are the peacemakers." That means that we are not going to be able to stand quietly.



That means that we are going to stand in places at work, at school, out in the real world where a lie is going to come through, something that is in opposition to God's truth and His way of life.

And we're not just going to say, "I just want to keep the peace. I don't want to say anything." We're going to say, "No, no, no. God has given me these shoes to speak in this moment to bring peace to this situation. And It's going to be hard for me and I'm going to be uncomfortable. But I know that it could mean peace, so I'm willing to say it, because I have the belt of truth and the armor of righteousness and the shoes of peace."

Do you have that? Do you want that? Do you desire that? That's a big step to go from, "I don't want to disturb anything. I don't want to stir anything up." To, "No, I'm willing, I'm willing to lay my reputation down. I'm willing to put it all out there. I'm willing to be a mouthpiece for God because that's what I'm called to do. That's why I was given these shoes."

I think a lot of times we feel that conviction. We feel God stirring us to say something, to do something, to not just keep peace but to make it. We're like, "No. That's too much. That's crazy. I couldn't even do that if I wanted to." And God is whispering, trying to get us to be obedient to the life that He has for us. But the more we push it down, the more it becomes harder and harder to experience peace.

Here's the truth we get from Scripture:
Peace comes from obedience

Are you being obedient to the last thing that God called you to do? In your family. At work. In that setting. You know what it was. God spoke you. You heard it. You felt it. You had this moment of, "I'm going to do it." And then you're like, "I'm not going to do it." What is that thing? Because until you deal with it, you're not going to be able to experience that peace that surpasses all understanding. Is there anything in God's Word that when you read it you're like, "Oh, that's so good. I know that's right. I know I should do that, but I'm not going to." Anytime we begin to create space there, it creates room in our armor where we're no longer being protected by the peace of God.

Look at the way Psalm 119 says it. It says:
"Those who love your instructions," talking about God, "have great peace and do not stumble." Psalm 119:165 (NLT)



It takes the collection, the whole of God's Word. And they follow it. They meditate on it day and night. And they say, "God, what are You saying? What do You want me to do? Whatever that is, no matter the consequences, I want to be obedient to that call. I want to be obedient to what You call me to do." Is there any part or any instruction from the Lord that you're being disobedient to? Because if we put on the shoes of peace but don't wear them for what they are intended for, we will eventually take them off. These shoes were meant to bring peace. They are meant and designed to specifically step on difficult terrain in difficult conversations to go against powers of darkness, spiritual evil. That's what these shoes were created for.

And it's not just for you. It's for other people. God never just wanted them to be a blessing for us. It is always meant to be extended to other people. These shoes you have aren't just for you.

Look at this in Romans, chapter 10. It says:

"How can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" Romans 10:15 (NIV)

You see, you're putting on these shoes and you're going out. They are taking you somewhere. They are not just for putting them on and then I create this forcefield of peace around me. No, I am a messenger who brings the Good News.

At the same time, if I don't wear these shoes for what they are meant for and I try to live like I was living in the world but with the shoes of peace, I'm going to be frustrated. They are going to hurt. They are not going to be able to let me move the way I could in my other shoes. Does that make sense?

It's like this. You can't play golf in your basketball shoes. And you for sure can't play basketball in your golf shoes. There is going to come a time where you are like, "I just need to take these off. These are more of a hindrance than helpful. It would be better to be barefoot than to wear these things."

I just got this picture as I was preparing for today of putting on those shoes and then keeping them on, not taking them off.

I had this picture... Have you ever driven by a golf course and what you see is all of these people getting out of their car, they pop the trunk, they sit down and then they take off their shoes and they put on their golf shoes. And then they play the course, they do everything, and they go through.



Then once they are done, they sit back down on the trunk of their car, on their tailgate, and they take off their golf shoes and put back on their regular shoes. Because no one would go out with their golf shoes. It doesn't make any sense. And I felt like I just saw this picture of so many of us coming to church every single week and before we come in here we take off our regular shoes and we put on our church shoes. And we come in and we worship and we get filled and we have a teaching, maybe we even serve. We do all of those things, and we walk out, and then we pop the trunk, and we sit down, and we take off our church shoes and put them back in the trunk and put our tennis shoes back on. I just want to call you today to this space, don't take off the shoes. There are no church shoes and worldly shoes. God has given us the last pair of shoes that, as a follower of Jesus, we will ever need to put on. There are no sacred and secular spaces. The peace that He's called you to, the peace He's going to equip you with when you come here and you worship and you serve—that's the peace the world needs.

We've got to stop taking off these shoes. Do you feel like you are doing that? Do you feel like you come here and you move differently? Do you feel like you are more agile, that spiritual athleticism, you feel so nimble and quick on your feet and then you get to Wednesday and you're like, "Where did all of that go? I feel like I'm wearing bricks. I don't feel like I can do what I'm supposed to be doing."

What Paul is getting at is that you can't take off the shoes. It's for you for sure. You will experience peace that passes all understanding. But it's also peace for your neighbor, it's peace for your co-worker, it's peace to bring the gospel. That's the only thing that matters. It's the only thing that can change lives. Jesus is the only One who can save anyone. Are you taking that Good News to those around you? It's not just about your peace.

Look at this in 1 Peter, chapter 3, verse 15. It says:
"...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect," (ESV)

Are you prepared? Why not? When you think about putting on the shoes of peace it's this idea that you are going to bring the Good News, that God is going to look at you and say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News to those who haven't gotten the news yet." Are you prepared to do that? What is stopping you from keeping those shoes on? What causes you to put on different shoes when you go to work and different shoes when you come home? Because I think you'll see that there is a connection between where the peace of God is, where these shoes are, and why you show up and feel the way that you do.



I also want to remind you that you're not putting these shoes as an expert. You're not saying, "I made these shoes. You should put on these shoes. Do what I am doing. You will love these shoes. I designed them."

No, you're saying, "Look, God gave me these shoes. I don't understand a lot of what happened. But I can tell you that I gave my life to Jesus when I believed that He loved me and He gave His Son for me. I have a peace that surpasses all understanding. I know I lost my job. I know I know I'm sick. I know I don't have very much time left on this earth, but I'm telling you I have a peace that surpasses all understanding. Can I tell you about the gospel?"

Are you prepared to give that? We are not called to give expert testimony. But eyewitness testimony. That is how you need to be prepared, "Am I going into these situations believing that everyone around me, no matter what else they need, they also need the peace of God. Am I prepared to deliver it?" That's what we're looking for.

When we say, "I want the peace of God," it takes a lot of effort and a lot of training and a lot of work and a lot of commitment to experience that peace. It's not just a switch.

So, if I were you, this is what I would be wrestling with this week, "Have I settled for a cheap substitute of what peace really is? Am I trying to live the life God has called me to without the shoes? Am I getting frustrated with how I can't move the way I should. What is this?" Or "Am I going to address the situation and say, 'I need to put on a different pair of shoes.'?"

And the last thing I want to put before you, and maybe this is the one for you of why you don't have peace in this moment. Here's the question I want you to wrestle with:

Are you at peace with God?

Are you at peace with God? We try to jump to the circumstantial, "Pastor, just teach me how to get the things that I need so that I can have peace." Hopefully, I've shared it with you, there is no perfect circumstance that will bring you peace. Everything is just a moment away, a click away, an email away, one bad decision away from destroying the peace that you have. Even health—you may have a clean bill of health right now. I just want to tell you—spoiler alert—you're going to die. You're going to get sick. And if your hope and your peace is bound up in how you feel and how healthy you are, one day even that is going to be taken.



There is only one thing that can provide you peace. There is only one thing that you can be given (and it's free) that will actually provide the peace that your heart longs for, that you ache for, that you try to find in everything else but God. Are you angry with God? We're never going to experience peace unless we have peace with Him. Do you think that God hates you? When you think of God what comes to mind? What do you need to confess to God? What resentment has built up?

Do you hate God? We can't even be honest enough to say that out loud, but you can hate God. You can hate God and sit in church. You can hate God and serve in Kids' Ministry. You can hate God and do all of the things you feel you're obligated to because you have too. But at the end of the day, if you're being honest, and you're not just trying to keep peace, but if you're making peace, you can say, "No, I'm angry with God."

"Yeah, I hate God. He didn't show up for me when I thought He would. He didn't bring healing like I thought He would. He didn't come down for it like I thought He should. And if He would have just been there then my life would be better. And if He is real then why doesn't He feel real? If He can do anything, why does it feel like He hasn't done anything?"

But I'm telling you, we have to confess that. So many of us feel that, experience that, have that inner dialogue, but we're like, "I can't say that in group this week. I can't share that with my family later this week. I definitely can't share that with God." Why? There are so many different pictures of who God is. He is the Commander of this army. He is a judge. But he's also a heavenly Father. And I can tell you on this Father's Day? I know a little bit about what being a heavenly Father is. You want your babies at peace. You want to be able to speak to any kind of lie, anything that is separating them from who they think you are and to be able to provide just a little bit of insight. "No, no, no. That's not real. That's not true."

When you see your babies experience any kind of anxiety or depression, you just want to take it from them, even if they need to get it out, even if it takes some time to articulate and to get it out, you just want them to because you know that until they wrestle with it, they are never going to be able to come to a place of peace. It's the same thing with us and God: Until we have peace with God, we'll never truly experience peace from God



Do you hear me? Until we wrestle all of the way down to share the last 10 percent of what we're holding onto, any root of bitterness, any anger that we have toward God... The Bible gives us permission to come to Him like a child comes to a father. There are no rules. There are no things you can't say, "I just want to share with you my heart." He wants to hear it.

You have a heavenly Father. And for so many of us, the view of the heavenly Father gets tainted by our earthy father, "If my father was like this, I'm guessing God is like that." That's probably why today is so hard. Because when you think of God the Father, you're like, "I don't need another one of those."

But can I tell you this today? The One who offers you peace is a good Father. The One who offers you peace gives good gifts. The One who offers peace loves you with a love that we will never truly be able to comprehend. Your heavenly Father sent His one and only Son here to live the perfect life, to go to a cross, to pay the debt that you and I owed. Your heavenly Father loves you so much so that you would never face condemnation, but you could receive the free gift of eternal life.

That is the heavenly Father that awaits you. That is the heavenly Father who wants you at peace with Him. That is the heavenly Father who can handle your anger and your pain and your frustration. Stop trying to keep the peace, make the peace. Make this week about, "I'm going to get it all out. I'm going to be honest with God. I'm going to share with Him. Even if I don't get the answers." Here's what we do get. We don't always get the why for why things happen. Job was in the midst of some crazy stuff. I'm guessing he wasn't piecing together why this was happening.

But here's what we do know. Whatever happens to us, whatever pain, whatever trial, whatever struggle the answer can't be because God doesn't love us. Because God has proven how much He loves us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So, we stand here today and I just want us to stand in peace, maybe for the first time. So, at all of our campuses, if you would just stand to your feet.

And here's the thing. Maybe you've never placed your faith in Jesus. And you've never really been able to grab hold of what true peace is. I just want to call you to this. Don't leave here today without talking to someone. It's free. It's a gift: salvation, peace, love, joy it is all waiting for you. All you have to do is come up and claim it. At all of our campuses, we'll have people around the room. Don't leave here without talking to someone.



And then for all of us, we're about to worship. And I just want you to connect. All of this goes together, everything we've done from the beginning to this moment right here. I just want to ask you to lock in. Don't break away. What God could do in the next few minutes could be the whole point of you getting here today. You need to hear this, because you have a heart of bitterness, you have anger, you have suppressed feelings toward God. And if you're never at peace with God you're never going to experience true peace.

I want you to hear the words of these songs that we are going to sing that our good Father has good plans for your life. And even if you can't see it, you can't experience it, you've got to know that He's working all things together to the good of those who love Him.

So, in this moment I'm going to pray and then we're going to worship together. Would you close your eyes and bow your head?

Father, we thank You so much for today. Father, we thank You for Your word. God, we thank You for the shoes of peace that you have given us. God, it's a gift. But God, unless we put them on and use them intentionally for how they were designed and what they were used for, we're going to eventually take them off, we're going to look for other shoes, we're going to want to move differently. But Your shoes were given to bring us peace and to bring peace, to make peace, in this world.

And, God, as we get attacked by the enemy as he throws everything that he has at us. God, I pray that we could stand in the confidence of Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone.

God, you are the faithful One. You are the only One who provides security and safety and true peace. So, we stand here with our shoes of peace, committed to never taking them off again.

We are going to leave this place, and we are going to believe that, God, You are a good Father who has good plans for our life. We are going to step out of here and we are going to know that we are the ones You've called to bring heaven down to earth. And we are going to stand in that space believing you will meet us every step of the way.

Father, we believe that You have good plans. Lift our eyes up. God, let us be honest with you this week and let us speak what we need to say so that You can speak in the gaps.

Jesus, we love You. We trust You. And it's in Your perfect and only name we pray. And the church says: Amen.

