

Aug 4, 2013

Strong in the Lord – the Gospel of Peace Eph 6:15

Summarizing the past 2 weeks. 1. We are strong in the Lord when we put on His armor. **Know God's truth.**

Do His truth

2. The pieces of the armor are a metaphor. The belt – is God's truth. The breastplate – is God's righteousness.(imputed & imparted)

Eph 6.10,15 Finally, be strong in the Lord ...15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

BIG IDEA: we are strong in the Lord when we put on the gospel (action)

Now what are these shoes? (a metaphor) and what is this gospel that Paul is referring to?

these "shoes" the sandals, or shoes, which were probably made so as to cover the foot, and which often were fitted with nails, or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground; **The modern equivalent - football spikes** - with greaves that were fitted to the legs, and designed to defend them from any danger.. **hockey shin guards**

1. The Gospel (Good News) is **God's truth** (2 Tim 3.16, Rom 1.16, Eph 2.12, 1-5)

2 Tim 3.16 All Scripture is breathed out by God

Put it together: Readiness: put on the shoes - put on God's truth! (not in the cupboard, more than knowing – use the truth) **"to make (us) firm in the day of conflict with (our) foes."**

This Gospel is in fact great news!

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,

our condition without God helps us to better appreciate the good news

Eph 2.12, (we were) separated from Christ, having no hope and without God in the world. 1 -3 **dead in (our) trespasses and sins, sons (and daughters) of disobedience by nature children of wrath,**

Then know what God has done

Eph 2.4,5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— **so that we can be reconciled to God & at peace with God: hence the gospel of peace**

2. The Gospel is that **God is our strength** (portions of Eph 1:3-2:10)

In fact – God is our everything! God chose us in Jesus before the foundation of the world He predestined us for adoption as sons (and daughters), He has redeemed us, forgiven our sins, According to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us given us an inheritance sealed us with His spirit, the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, made us alive together with Christ, ... seated us with Christ, shows us the immeasurable riches of [God's] grace, [God] gave us the gift of faith we are [God's] workmanship, **created for good works,** which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

3. God created us to **'get the gospel in'** to those around us. (Mat 28.18-20)

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

Speaking the truth is powerful to us and to those to whom we speak the truth.

4. God created us to **'get the gospel out'** to those He brings into our lives. (Matt 28.19, 2 Cor 5:18-21)

Matt 28.19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

Me: This God given responsibility to 'get the gospel out' has been very challenging to me. **Perhaps you can relate.** When I first came to Christ I was clearly taught that Christ's great commission was to go and make disciples. I was encouraged to prepare my testimony, (how I came to Christ, and the difference Christ makes) and learn how to share the gospel, the good news! In my first few years as a believer I even took training – but as the years went on I became more and more hesitant, even afraid. Afraid of offending family, fellow

workers, friends, feeling awkward, embarrassed. **Have you felt the same things?** This responsibility became a great burden in my life, but something I did not know how to break out of.

Mike has taught and encouraged us over many years. The lessons that have stuck with me – seek **to become more bold** to get the gospel out, **speak the name of Jesus**, to **look for opportunities** to share of God's work in our lives, **develop friendships** through our interests, and recently from last year's series on the 'Cost of Discipleship' to become willing to **create opportunities** to speak the good news and share the difference that Jesus has made to our lives

Last spring I asked God to help me step out in faith in this area of great weakness. I have been doing volunteer work with TC and I was aware that they gave their students evangelism training. I asked and was given permission last May to join the TC students to be trained and participate with them in their street evangelism outreaches. As uncomfortable and unnatural as I felt at the time, I knew that I needed to trust God and take action. Over this past year **God has reinforced my responsibility**

2Co 5:18-20 All this (v17 if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation) **is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;** 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.** (our choice – good or poor ambassadors)
& I grown in my confidence that I can act in His strength (Eph)

I have also learned some Practical suggestions to 'get the gospel out': which I would like to share with you
a) prepare yourself do not be surprised that this is unnatural. How do we boil down God's truth and God's work in our lives into a few sentences? This takes thought and effort and a need to put the Good News in our own words. Take God at His Word. He has commanded us to go out and make disciples. He has made us His ambassadors. He has prepared us for this good work! We need to do the work. He will guide us. Ask God to give you a great burden for those around you for without Christ they are without hope.

b) train yourself – find good books on evangelism. Make a point of practicing your testimony and giving the gospel. Find someone to train with. Plan for field training: There are good people who are experienced and can help you in your journey in our congregation. (Julie Mix, Chris Standish, Chuck Stover, Darren Connors.) Someone like Corey (Nate's friend) offers courses and practical experience. For the past year I have been going out on a weekly basis to downtown London to share the Good News. My trainer was Darren Connors. As scary as this may sound, I have learned that it is not ½ as bad or frightening as you might imagine. I have learned how to create opportunities and how to share the good news (the gospel, my testimony). This is now firmly planted in my heart. **Other lessons:** it is OK to be rejected, experiment, mess up, not have all the answers.

c) trust God to go before you. Pray for, look for and seek to create opportunities. This is God's work. We are commanded to sow seed – to get the truth out, as is fitting for the situation. Know that God often uses many people to speak into an individual's life over a period of time. We are to be God's faithful workers. He is the One who saves. **Am I still scared? Yes.** - it is becoming more 'natural' to me to share this Good News to people whom God is bringing across my path. My hope and goal is to become more and more comfortable with speaking out for Jesus, such that this becomes part of my day to day conversations with family and friends who do not know Christ.

You: God calls us to do our part. God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. We are His ambassadors. We are strong in the Lord. Like any good soldier, we need teaching, training and practice. In keeping with the Daniel series, **I dare you** to follow up with someone you trust this week and **make a commitment to become competent to 'get the gospel out'** and entrust yourself to God to go before you in this journey!

We: I have discovered great joy in taking up my place, as a new man in Christ (even at this stage in my life), to speak the truth of God as often, as sensitive, as creatively, as boldly as I can to believers (getting the gospel in) and those who do not yet believe (getting the gospel out).

As I speak God's truth to others, I speak it to my own heart and reaffirm the precious truths of God – truths we can stand on, truths we can take into battle.

My prayer is that God would use His Word to you today to give you hope to be strong with the readiness given by the gospel of peace! He will lead you. He will train you. Our God will delight to work through you and me for we are His soldiers and His ambassadors. Let us strive by the grace of God to be the best soldiers, the best ambassadors, the best children of God that we can be. To God be all the glory.

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The Gospel of Peace

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BIG IDEA: we are **strong in the Lord** when we put on the gospel

1. The Gospel (Good News) is 'God's truth' (2 Tim 3:16, Rom 1:16, Eph 2.12,1-5)
2. The Gospel is that God is our strength (Eph 1.3 - 2:10)
3. God created us to 'get the gospel in' to those around us (Matt 28.18-20)
4. God created us 'get the gospel out' to those He brings into our lives.
(Matt 28.19, 2 Cor 5:18-20)

Practical suggestions to 'get the gospel out':

- a) prepare yourself
- b) train yourself
- c) trust God to go before you