

# Stand Against the Devil by Lacing Up the Gospel of Peace

Intro: Our God is the God of peace, of removing that which separates by His own active grace. Matthew Henry said that "Peace is a such a precious jewel I would give anything for it – except truth."

## i. We Have the Need to be Prepared for Battle

- i. Shod your feet with the boots of the Gospel of Peace
- ii. Paul calls this part of God's armor "preparation" or "readiness"
  1. As your feet go, so your position in battle goes
    - a. These "boots" were Roman soldier's boots, 2cm of leather for soles with hobnails in place for sure and firm footing.
    - b. These are not sandals meant for running, but for marching, holding ground, and keeping sure footing in any kind of terrain
  2. Prepare your defense by setting your feet firmly in the peace that Jesus Christ has purchased for you
- iii. Peace is the removal of all obstacles of enmity or contention
  1. Within every contention there are grievances, *injustices* that create enmity
    - a. At the root of every broken relationship is some injustice
    - b. The offended party must be satisfied for there to be a healing of enmity
  2. For peace is not merely the ignoring of contention (peace-keeping), but the obliteration of the obstacle between parties that caused the contention (peace-making)
    - a. Each party must be satisfied to the point where the contention is no longer present actively or underneath the surface of the relationship
    - b. Peace removes the obstacle of contention

## ii. Objective: Through faith in Jesus Christ we have peace with God

- i. Why Do We Need Peace With God? Sin has brought us into enmity and contention with God, *for He is righteous* and is wrathful against sin.
  1. Because God is righteous, God has burning anger (wrath) against injustice (Zeph 3:5-8).
    - a. God reveals Himself in wrath against injustice (Rom 2:5)
    - b. Truth cannot coexist with error, injustice with perfect justice, sin with holiness. God is so different that it is His very nature to rightly hate that which is opposed to Him (sin) and therefore burns with wrath and retribution because of it.
  2. Our sin (injustice toward God) has created enmity (an obstacle) between us and God
    - a. This obstacle is not the injustice itself, but rather it is God's justice
      - i. Why can't God just forgive us? Why does there have to be a contention?
      - ii. Because God is just! It is His very nature to be righteous.
        1. To "forgive" without satisfying His righteousness would make God unjust, acting against His own character, going against His Word making Him a liar and making something else greater than Himself
        2. Every injustice must be paid for. We all feel this truth within our own relationships.
          - a. For every injustice creates a debt. It cannot be ignored, it must be paid (atoned) for.
          - b. We all need to know that injustice will be paid up, that evil doesn't win in the end. If you have ever been the victim of terrible injustice, you know that this truth is real.

"[You say] you can't conceive of a God who would ever punish anyone — that wouldn't be loving. But you have to understand God's [justice]. If I backed into the door of your new car out in the parking lot, and we went to court, and the judge said, 'That's no problem, Bill didn't really mean it,' you'd be up in arms. You'd want

justice. If you went to a Cubs game, and Sutcliffe threw a strike down the middle of the plate, and the ump said, 'Ball four,' and walked in a run, you'd be out there killing the ump, because you want justice. [You] hear that and say, 'I guess you're right. I wouldn't want a God who wasn't just.' But before you say, "Rah, rah for a just God," let me tell you some of the implications. That means he metes out justice to you."

~ Bill Hybels

- ii. Jesus has purchased our peace with God completely
  - 1. Forgiveness through Atonement eliminates the obstacle between us and God by 1) atoning for the sin (Jesus' death *for* our sins) and 2) making us righteous (fulfilling the requirements of the law *for* us)
  - 2. Heb 2:14-17
    - a. *Propitiation* was necessary to appease God's wrath against sin
    - b. 1 John 4:10, Jesus was the required *propitiation*
      - i. Typically the offender offers propitiation, but in the Gospel, the offended party pays the price of propitiation as a gracious gift
      - ii. Only the blood of the perfect Son of God was sufficient in value to placate, and even remove the wrath of God and replace it with peace, mercy, and sonship

"The cross does not represent a compromise between God's wrath and love; it does not satisfy each one half-way. Rather, it satisfies each fully in the very same action."  
~Timothy J. Keller

- 3. Because He is our righteousness before God, He has removed the obstacle of contention against us by shedding His blood in our place, bringing peace
  - a. Eph 1:2 – peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
    - i. Peace is one of the most common greetings in Christ
    - ii. Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:2
  - b. Eph 2:13-17 – brought near, both Jew and Gentile, by the blood of Christ
  - c. Colossians 1:20 – Jesus reconciles all things to Himself by making peace through the blood of His cross
- 4. We are ready for battle when we fully believe that we are at peace with God through the blood and resurrected life of Jesus
  - a. We are righteous in Him, our sins forgiven by His blood
  - b. His Spirit is within us for our good and His glory
  - c. Our General is going to win this war

## What are our enemy's strategies in these attacks on our peace?

- 1. **Accusing:** Satan will tempt you to despair over your sin, feel its great guilt, and then try to save yourself by religion (*No faith* in Jesus as the Redeemer)
  - a. He is the accuser of the redeemed (Rev 12:10) and wants you to live in joyless guilt over your sin.
  - b. He gives you a half-truth that you are *only* guilty (but he will not take you to Jesus)
    - i. Satan tempts us into believing that as long as we make up for our sins by doing good deeds, we will be OK with God. That peace is found through good deeds!
      - 1. He distracts us with religion and half-truths. You are accused and you are guilty, but Satan doesn't want you to see Jesus, he wants you to attempt to save yourself.
      - 2. Why? Because he knows that you'll never make it.
    - ii. At the root of this joyless guilt is really self-righteousness. We feel that we have failed and there is not really any help. We give lip service to God's redemption in Christ, but we wallow and

over-grieve, living instead in anxiety and fear because *we have not done enough*. We have forgotten that we are saved by sheer grace and that Jesus has done it all!!

1. We believed the half-truth, the half-gospel: that our sin is greater than we can even imagine, but we have *forgotten* practically about *Jesus*.
2. **Excusing:** While accusing you, Satan will tempt you into thinking that your sin is not so bad. He will try to get you to believe that God doesn't punish anybody.
  - a. The half-truth that God *only* loves you. (*No repentance* of our sins as the righteous cause of God's wrath against us)
  - b. He is the tempter of the brethren and the excuser of sin (Jer 6:14) and wants you to think that sin isn't that bad in the eyes of God.
    - i. At the root of excusing is the false-peace that we proclaim in the name of grace! We sweep sin under the rug of grace and do not learn to hate it or to grieve over it. We excuse it in actuality and do not repent of its deeper root of pride and self-righteousness. Because at the root of excusing sin is the belief that I am not that bad off. I don't really need a complete Savior because I'm going to be OK. God wouldn't punish sin, He is love, right? So we stay in sin, finding no power to overcome it or to live in the joy of redemption, finding comfort in the apathetic shallowness of self-righteous pride and amorphous false-humility. This is pride at its worst!
    - ii. "We all make mistakes" – truth that is twisted to excuse our sins by comparing ourselves to one another
      1. Romans 2:15, our conscience accuses and excuses us in our sin
      2. 2 Cor. 10:12, those who compare themselves by themselves

"And so our thoughts go round and round, one half of us accusing ourselves and the other half excusing ourselves, and all the time we are thus excusing ourselves we are getting farther and farther from the grace of God and from peace. This was precisely the effect that the accusations of his friends had on Job. In suggesting that the trials came as a result of some wrong in him, they provoked him to assert vigorous innocence, and on that ground he found that God fought against him. Upright man that he really was, he had none the less to be *broken* to accept the sinner's place before he could be at peace with God." ~Roy and Revel Hession

## How do we respond to these attacks of accusing and excusing?

- a. **See Jesus and boast in the Cross:** He satisfies God's justice against sin, trust in Him right now
  - iii. Matt 1:21
  - iv. Mark 10:45
  - v. Luke 5:32
  - vi. 1 Tim 1:15
- b. In the gospel of Jesus the Holy Spirit *convicts us of our sin, and then takes us to Jesus*, where we see the whole truth of the gospel of Jesus:
  - vii. we are more deeply sinful than we even know and that sin is terribly egregious and an affront to God Himself. It brings wrath and judgment and Hellfire! **It is so serious and real that Jesus had to come and die to satisfy God's justice!**
  - viii. we are more deeply loved than we can even dare to hope, for the Father did not leave us under His wrath but sent His Son to die in our place and bear up our sins, even in their ferocity. **By His grace He has done it all and He loves us so much that He DID die for us to satisfy God's justice! You belong to God as beloved sons!**
    1. So, in the gospel we see that:
      - a. We cannot stay in the realm of accusation, for the grace of Jesus and His complete work on the cross has brought us forgiveness of sins, the imputed righteousness of Christ (we've got our breastplate on). The Gospel of peace shows us that Jesus satisfied God's justice.

- b. Nor can we live without the truth that our sin rightly brings God's wrath, and live only in false-peace, where we excuse our sin as nothing and pass it off as inconsequential. The Gospel leads us to repent. We are saved by sheer grace and it took the death of the Son of God to free us from sin's deadly grasp, so we repent with joyful hope and deep gratitude.
2. If we *forget* either of these truths, we will be buffeted by fear, anxiety, and pride, living our lives being tossed back and forth without peace. Maybe you live there today and you feel tossed about, listless, and terror has overcome you more and more often as of late.

Conclusion:

Look to the cross of Jesus Christ to find your peace, for at the cross of Christ the love of God meets the justice of God so that God is "both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Rom 3:26) Can you really have peace with God, this rest that has eluded you for so long? Yes!! Emphatically, yes!! And it comes from God Himself. What kind of God is this? He who, though being the one in the right, the offended of our sin, took the step from eternity to enter into the suffering of His creation and make peace with a rebellious people by bearing up His own just wrath! Remember this truth of the gospel of peace today, and lace up preparing to defend yourself from the enemy of the Cross.

Repent freely of your sins and failures, for in this repentance you have placed your foot across the threshold of peace. And place your trust in the righteousness of Christ and in His blood to atone for your sins, not trying to earn God's peace or His favor, but humbly accepting Christ's work on your behalf. In this faith you take the second step across the threshold of peace with God (Rom 5:1, *Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*).

Look to Jesus today. For some of you, it may be the first time; enter into peace with God through faith in Jesus. For others, you may already have a relationship with God through Jesus, but the enemy's arrows of accusation and excuse have caused your feet to slip and stumble into resentment and joylessness. Repent again of relying on your own righteousness and humbly turn to your Savior in humble trust. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the End of your journey, not merely the means to it. In His face, walking with Him, you will find that He is all that you need, no matter your trouble, and He alone is your rest and your security in the soul's battle.

## COMMUNION: Drinking to Remember the Cross of Christ

Contemplate with me these thoughts from Robert Murray M'Cheyne:

He was without any comforts of God — no feeling that God loved him — no feeling that God pitied him — no feeling that God supported him. God was his sun before — now that sun became all darkness... He was without God — he was as if he had no God. All that God had been to him before was taken from him now. He was Godless — deprived of his God. He had the feeling of the condemned, when the Judge says: "Depart from me, ye cursed," "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." He felt that God said the same to him. Ah! This is the hell which Christ suffered. The ocean of Christ's sufferings is unfathomable... He was forsaken in the [place] of sinners. If you close with him as your surety, you will never be forsaken... "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" [The answer?] For me — for me.

~ Robert M. M'Cheyne