

The Whole Armor of God Part 3 - Boots on the Ground

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Nathaniel Bronner: Sometimes you got to be ready to fight the main hand beast.

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And now for 5706, "The Whole Armor of God, Part 3, Boots on the Ground."

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because "Brother, you need the Word." And today, we're in the middle of a series from Ephesians Chapter 6 beginning at the 10th verse. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil for he wrestles not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand, stand therefor having your loins gird about with truth. And part one was "The Utility Belt of Truth" and having on "The Breastplate of Righteousness, Part 2", was the breastplate of righteousness. And today, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

And today, Part 3 of "The Whole Armor of God" subtitled "Boots on the Ground". Now, for those of you who are watching by video or live here in the sanctuary, you can see, I don't have a mismatched socks but I have a mismatched shoes. On my right foot, is a regulation desert army boot. On my left foot, the best way that I can describe this is a freely nilly bedroom slipper. It's all white and fuzzy and furry. It looks really, really comfortable, but there are two opposite purposes with these shoes and I wore this to illustrate the preparation having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

See, many of us have this freely, nilly, willy, fuzzy footwear and some of us have these army boots that are ready for battle. And with your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

See, Paul was the analogy of the whole armor of God fundamentally used the armor and the military garb of the Roman soldier. Rome at the time was the mightiest military force on the face of the earth. And Rome and the Roman Empire had almost conquered the entire known world. Caesar in Rome was powerful. Some of you won't even know who Rome is today because they fell so far and so fast, they even changed their name.

Rome is no longer called "Rome". It's "Italy". That's who they're talking about. They're talking about Italians. It's Italy. They beat them boys so bad they had to just change their name. But at one point, that's why if you are not cognizant, if you are not diligent, you will lose your position and you will lose what you have if you don't adapt and if you don't change. Now, the Roman soldier at the time was the best equipped soldier for battle in the world. Right now, that same equipment will get you killed.

But the footwear of the Roman soldier, it was not just a boot, it was an entire piece of metal that came up right above the knee. It was solid metal tube that you clamp the two sides together with leather straps and it went above your knee to right at the top of your foot. Then they put a metal plate on the top of your foot and a metal plate with spikes on the bottom of your foot and latched them all together with leather. And the reason for this is the Roman soldier had to go through all kind of terrain and rocks and sometimes go up mountains and they would bruise the shin if it wasn't well-protected and sometimes, the enemy would put spikes out and cover the spikes so if you stepped on the spike, the spike went through your foot.

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And it was a way of -- whereas the modern weapon will be a landmine, in the old days, they just have some nails. And see, if you stepped on a nail, you were out of commission because you couldn't march. They didn't have Humvees and M1 Abram tanks and all that. They didn't have Black Hawk helicopter. You had to march everywhere you went. So, if you got a spike through your foot, that soldier was out of commission. He couldn't move and he couldn't fight because he couldn't stand up. So, the feet were very important in battle. So, they had to have a strong metal plate underneath so if they ran across enemy spikes, the spikes didn't go through their foot and it did

not put the soldier out of commission. And you have to understand even with your feet shod with the preparation of peace, why would he use military attire to represent peace because sometimes you got to be ready to fight the main hand beast.

Do you know (00:06:00) war in heaven. You all know that? There was a war in heaven. So, war is in heaven and on earth. War is a natural state of existence and it is just there. And if you don't have your stuff together, folk will take your stuff. There's no question about that. So, you need to have -- it's called peace through strength. Do you realize if the United States did not have a strong military even though we are a so-called Christian nation, do you know folk will come on here and take your stuff? They would take every bit of our stuff. So, military might in this world and in the world up there. It's absolutely necessary for you to maintain peace. That's why you lock your car when you get out of it. Now, yes, angels are watching over your stuff but you lock your car, you lock your house, you got passwords on your bank account, all these kind of stuff. We have to secure ourselves against those who would do us harm.

So, military might was necessary and that's why you need the whole armor of God because you are fighting a Satanic force. And this boy good, he's better than the Romans. He hadn't gone anywhere. His kingdom has not been destroyed and it's going to be destroyed sooner or later but it's here now. And he's not weaker, if anything, he's stronger now than ever before. So, you've got to have some military might. That's why I said against the wiles of the devils. That's the trickery, the deception, the deceit of the devil. You got to have some armor.

First, you got to have proof then you need to be doing the right stuff and then everywhere you walk, you need to be protected against spikes that are placed to disable you, to mess up your walk with God. You have got to have your feet protected. And I notice that even as I have on these two types of footwear, I can't walk balanced. I'm walking almost with a limp and I'm not limping. It's just one shoe is totally different from the other. I can feel with this left, willy nilly, fuzzy shoe, I can feel everything on the ground. My feet are not protected.

With this boot, it's solid and I can walk solid. I could bump into

something with this boot. I'm kicking -- it doesn't bother me with this boot. I'm not even going to try that with this little willy nilly, I'd break my toe. And see, if you are not shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the enemy will break your toe, mess up your walk and you will fall because you cannot stand.

So, this is a part of just understanding shoding our feet with the gospel of peace. And you see, there's a lot of different kind of feet and shoes in the church. You got a tender foot. They'd basically can't take anything you say, just (00:08:48) to know it. It's just a tender foot. Then, you got cold feet. They need to get their lives to Christ but they just got cold feet. Then, you got itching feet. They just want to go somewhere else. Then, you got people whose feet are solidly on the ground. They are rooted solidly in the Word. Then you got other kind of feet where the people put their foot in their mouth. They just say all the wrong stuff and the wrong thing. And sometimes, you need to just put your foot down. Some of you all in situations right now. You just need to put your foot down. Then, you got people that got the hot foot. Then, sometimes you have to foot the bill.

Sometimes when you have not been shod with the gospel of peace, you got to get back on your feet and you can have people who'll just step on your toes. There are different kind of shoes among Christians. Some people are wearing sneakers and they just sneaking around from place to place. Some people have on running shoes and they're like Jonah and they're running from the call of God. Some people got on flip flops. And one day he was God and the next day he were the devil.

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Some have on baby shoes. Hebrews 5:13 says, "For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness for he is a babe." But we need on as solid Christians, we need combat boots on because it's a war out there without question. The gospel of peace. John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you not as the world give it, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." You see, there are two fundamentally types of godly peace.

First of all, there's a peace with God. The peace with God is basically when you have given your life unto Christ. You've

given your life unto God and there's a peace with God but there's a second type. The first type most of the Christians in church, they have verbally given their life to Christ but there's a second type. There's a peace with God but there's a peace of God. Because even though we've got a lot of people in church who have given their life and have dedicated themselves verbally to God, they've got a peace with God. They don't have the peace of God. Stuff is still scarring them. Stuff is still upsetting them. They're still getting jealous of things.

I had a situation with my second oldest son, Joseys. Last week, I went out to see him in his first tennis match and he was playing a tennis match about an hour outside of town and I was watching him play and as I was watching him play, I was sitting on the sideline. His coach came over to me and he say, "You're Joseys' father?" I said, "Yes". He said I want to tell you about Joseys. He said Joseys is the strongest man in the school. He's an awesome, phenomenal athlete. He is just awesome and he taught Joseys a couple of academic classes. He said, "I just love Joseys in my class. His spirit is so good. He is so smart and he is so strong and he is such a phenomenal athlete." And he said, "But" he said, "But Joseys is so laid back". He said, "Can you somehow put some aggressiveness in Joseys?" And he was showing me -- he said, "You notice the way he's holding his tennis racket now?" They just got through serving the ball and Joseys had to rack it in the middle. He would just lally gally with it.

Whereas normally, when you really own the game. When you're standing there waiting -- just waiting. You're just waiting. He just had -- in the middle of the (00:12:27), just walking. He said, "You see that?" He said he is the most awesome athlete I've seen. He's the strongest boy in the school. He's academically flawless. Joseys made all As and one B and that one B was an 87. So, he said, "He is awesome". He said, "But can you put some aggressiveness, some eye of the tiger in?" And I said, "Well, I'll see what I can do about that." And I thought about it. I had an hour's drive back. So, I had time to think about the coach's request. I said, "The coach wants me to transform my son from a state of extreme peace and contentment into a state of aggressiveness and discontent and competition and desire." I said, "I don't want to do that".

I said, "I don't want to take my children anywhere I don't want

to go”. And God has taken me to a point where he said, “Don’t compete. Be content with things.” Understand. Your peace comes from within and I saw sometimes the delusion, the wiles sometimes. You can be in a situation where really things are going great but the world will come to you and say, “Look you need to be a little be more aggressive.” What you have is not good enough. Strongest boy in the school, nearly perfect academic record. He was the best player on the tennis team and the coach wanted to him to move from a point of contentment to a point of discontentment. Can you make him more aggressive?

See, in order to be more aggressive it means you got to be hungry. You’ve got to have something that you desire so much that it makes you just vibrate. It makes you want it so bad. You got to be hungry for the thing. And it’s not when it is something that God has destined for you, sometimes that’s a good state to be in, but I have found that peace has a value that’s beyond anything. And, people, I was running this morning. I was on the treadmill and after I had gone about a mile, I heard God said, “I want you to increase the speed to this for the second mile and I want you to bump it up another mile an hour for the third mile.” “Well, hold up Lord. I don’t know about that. I don’t know about that.” But I was hearing just as clear. He said, “You can do this. I want you to take your speed up.” So, when I got to the second mile, I bumped it up to the second level. I said, “I don’t know about this third mile, that’s pretty fast. I don’t know about this third mile.”

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“You take that speed, you obey and you bump it up.” So, when I hit the third mile, I took the speed up and after that first level, I was “Hoo, boy”. I was tired, it was getting rough and I was frowning all up and he just simply said, “Smile”. “Now, I’m running fast I can’t be --“ And he says, “smile” because I was frowning. When we’re under pressure and strain, our face shows it. He says, “Smile”. So, what I did, I just relaxed and I let myself start smiling. See, the treadmill controls the speed. So, I had the elevation set. I had the speed set. I can change that. And see, some of the stuff in life, the speed is already set. You can’t change your boss. You can’t change your husband. You can’t change your wife. You can’t change your school. You can’t change your teacher. You can’t change your preacher. So, it’s some stuff you can’t change. You can’t change the president. You

can't change the major. It's some stuff you can't -- the treadmill speed is set.

And God said, "You put this thing on this speed and you run this last mile at this speed." After that first level I was -- but then he said, "Smile". And when I began to smile, my body changed. The tension of the tiredness and the sore, I felt it all just melt away. There something about it people when you're under stress, you need the gospel of peace and we're praying for the situation to change. We're praying slow the treadmill down, decrease the evaluation, take the steep hill away, slow the stuff down. God says, "No, speed it up. You change. Put a smile on your face." And when I put that smile on my face, I felt a wave come over me and I was able to run those last three laps but I had to remember -- see, sometimes we don't understand why stuff happens.

You remember when I had the incident in Patmos, scooter crash and few weeks ago, someone ask me, how is your face doing with the fractures. And I said, Well, actually it's perfect, it's fine. The only time I can feel this thing is if I frown up. I can feel the fractures if I frown." You know what they told me? "Don't frown." Don't frown. And you know the only time I can even feel any residual from that thing is if I'm frowning. And then sometimes when you're working -- you know, you grit your teeth but you don't have to. You actually are just as strong with a smile on your face as you are grinning your teeth. We are programmed to react to certain situations with this left foot, it is fuzzy, without the protection instead of a combat boots of the gospel of peace. And if you can learn -- no matter how hard the treadmill is, if you can learn to smile, it changes you. It changes you. It didn't change the treadmill. It didn't slow it up one tenth of a mile. It didn't drop the elevation one tenth of a degree. It didn't change any of that. It changed me. And if you can change you, that's all you need to do. That's all you need to do.

And sometimes a smile by itself. If you can just watch your facial expressions. It puts on but you have to prepare for this kind of thing. That's why Paul says "the preparation". Because when you get in the situation, there's no time for you to try to get prepared for peace. You need to have that stuff already in your spirit. When somebody caught you off in traffic, you need to already be prepared because you need to have your spirit

strong when you face the stuff. Now, is the time to prepare, the time to be prepared is not the time to get prepared. So, peace is important people for all of us. And we need to have the peace of God over us.

And there's a peace of God that Paul simply says this, he says, "The peace of God that passes all understanding" And folk will not be able to understand how can you be peaceful, how can you be joyous with all that stuff going on around you? People, we're getting ready to go through some stuff in this country. Now, you can choose to frown or smile because it's not going to change the stuff. If you take, for example, the worst thing that can happen in your life is probably somebody close to you pass away, worst thing that can happen. You can choose to frown and fall to pieces or smile and see the beauty.

It's not going to change whether they're dead or alive one eye older. The difference comes in you. We got some stuff in the economy on the horizon. We got some stuff in government on the horizon. There are wars and rumors of wars. Didn't Jesus tell you that way back then? They were at war in Rome. This stuff has always been. They have political stuff way back then. That's what the tax collectors was all about. Nothing is new but the Kingdom of God is within you.

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The peace is within you and you have to make a choice whether you will frown or whether you will smile and which you decide to do is going to make all the difference in the world, same journey, same treadmill, same speed but whether you run it with ease, whether you run this race with joy or whether you run this race with a frown, the president cannot legislate that for you. The governor cannot pass a mandate. The mayor cannot pass an ordinance. That's up to you. The preacher can't command you to do it. That's up to you but it is a part of the preparation of the gospel of peace.

And when you truly get Jesus into your life, I mean, truly. I'm not talking about just saying, "Yeah, I serve Jesus." No, I'm talking about truly get him in your heart and do what he says to do. There's a peace that comes on you in any situation. I mean, my wife and I were out last time. I told her I would meet her somewhere, we're going somewhere. She said, "I don't want to

park in that. That's in the ghetto." I said, "I'm not worried about that sweetheart. Nobody's going to bother me." They just not and if they do, so what? If they do, so what?

So, this is a part of being prepared because stuff will come. Absolutely guaranteed but you need to have your peace and you don't need to let anybody take your peace. There's a quote that simply goes, "He who angers you controls you". You don't let anyone take your peace at all. If you have Jesus, you already have peace. You already have a smile on your face. Regardless of your circumstances. And if I can sit on that treadmill and just smile and I can just feel all my muscles. See, first of all, when your muscles are tight, you bust stuff. You know you're much more likely for injury when you are tight and when you are tense. You bust stuff. It's like that with your emotions. When you're uptight, stuff bust. So, when you are smiling, when you are peaceful -- I used to have on my personal checks, peace is the greatest possession and money can't buy it. Now, I have a picture of me and my (00:22:04) but that's what I use to have (00:22:07) on this sweetheart.

Peace is the greatest possession and money cannot buy it. I'm out of time. Bow your heads. Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for this day. Father, I pray peace for even your servant Paul and virtually every one of his greetings would always begin it with peace beyond to you. Father, I pray peace. I pray peace. I pray peace. The love of Jesus, the peace of Jesus be in the hearts and minds and spirits of every person within the sound of this message. Let them be armored and shield it with your love and your peace. In thy son Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

We thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because "Brother, you need the Word."

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