

Ephesians 15-04-12b

We pick up our study in Ephesians chapter 6, we're looking at verse 14 and following now. Stand having put on, and as I've pointed out in the past, these are perfect participles in Greek. And this is something that has happened in the past.

We have a need to do this before we proceed. So when it says in verse 14, having girded, having put on, this is an aorist participle. I said perfect, it's perfect in concept, meaning the action has already taken place.

What do we know about an aorist participle? The action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. I'll be babbling that in the old folks' homes sometime. What is he talking about? The action of the aorist participle precedes, it's just a commonplace, it's a given.

And so we translate this as having done a thing. Having done this, main action. What is the main action here? Stand.

This essentially means hold your ground. This is ground, high ground, that was won by the Lord Jesus Christ in His victory over sin and over death and over Satan at the cross. The strategic victory has been won.

The ground has been taken. We stand on that ground. And when it says stand, it means, this is a military command that means hold your ground.

Don't give up this hard won position. This golden opportunity based on the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hold your ground, having girded your waist with truth.

Having put on the belt of truthfulness. And now we've explored a little bit what that means. It's not just, oh, you know, truth.

What is truth? I saw somebody reenacting Pilate talking to the Lord Jesus. What is truth? Well, you know, they've been trying to figure that out in the human realm forever and haven't done it yet. But we know what that truth is.

Having belted your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. This is another aorist imperative, aorist middle participle with an imperative force, really. And we're talking now about a piece of defensive armor.

You can't really beat somebody to death with your breastplate. They didn't take these off and fling them like frisbees or try to mash somebody flat with them. It's defensive, right? Girding your waist, this is personal preparation.

This is done more or less. You don't say gird each other's waist with truth, do you? You don't tell somebody else, let me strap on that breastplate of righteousness for you. These are things that

we do in advance for ourselves.

This is personal preparation. Ensuring that we are characterized by truthfulness and that it is God's truth that distinguishes that truthfulness. Having put on, this is enduo.

And it's a real interesting word, this aorist middle participle, because put on is a frequently employed image. When we talk about enduo, this is to put on a robe, to put on clothing. We even have a verb in English that means to endue something.

It means to clothe it with things. So we have the putting on of this breastplate of righteousness. Now this is interesting because the breastplate is mentioned in another place by Paul.

And he doesn't call it the breastplate of righteousness. He's talking about the armor of God and he doesn't call it the breastplate of righteousness. Interestingly so.

Keep your finger here, but turn over to 1 Thessalonians 5. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 8. You remember the context here in chapter 5, the day of the Lord. I have no need to tell you about the seasons. You know the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night.

People are saying peace and safety. Sudden destruction comes like labor pains. They will not escape.

But verse 4, you brethren are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief. You are all children of light and children of the day. Sons of light, sons of the day.

You are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, don't sleep as others do. Let us watch and be sober.

Be self-controlled, be vigilant. For those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk are drunk at night.

Let us who are of the day, verse 8, be sober, putting on the breastplate of righteousness. Putting on the breastplate of what? Faith and love. What is the helmet in Ephesians chapter 6? Helmet of what? Salvation.

What's the helmet here? Hope of salvation, right? Now, pop quiz. Opportunity to think back, back, back into time. If I ask you to put down on a piece of paper, and I am confident every single one of you can do this, what are the three great Christian virtues? Say them out loud.

Faith, hope, and love. How many of those do you see mentioned here in verse 8? Breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet is hope. Hope of deliverance, hope of salvation.

Handy verse for the Christian virtues, is it not? Now, is Paul using kind of a different image, and the two don't correlate? Why does he say, because the helmet is basically the helmet in both places. Salvation is the helmet, and it's the hope of salvation, right? So, no contest there. But in

Ephesians, he says it's the breastplate of righteousness.

In Thessalonians, he says it is the breastplate of faith and love. Well, let's review what we know about the triad of Christian virtues, as I like to call them. I have an M&M&M for these.

It's a little memory aid. Faith is the means. Hope is the motivation.

Is this ringing a bell? A few little rust flakes coming off. Faith is the means. Hope is the motivation.

Love is the measure. How do you know if you are accomplishing the will and purpose of God by your faith, motivated by your hope, they will know we are Christians by our love. Love is the measure.

To the extent that we love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength, to the extent that we love our neighbor, not the man on some unknown intersection with a cardboard sign saying, Love your neighbor. Love the person you know that you can intelligently express generosity and interest and looking out for your neighbor. Love your neighbor.

That's the measure of whether we are, in fact, functioning effectively in the plan and purpose of God. How are you doing? Love for one another. By this shall all men know that you are truly my disciples.

That you what? Have faith? That you've got great hope? How are the disciples, the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have taken up their cross and are following him, what distinguishes them? You love. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you love them. Oh.

Is that what it says? All people in the earth will know that you're my disciples because you come out and love them. Not what Jesus said, is it? They'll know you're my disciples when you love one another. You love one another.

You are my disciple. You are my disciple. You two disciples are looking out for the interests of each other.

You are united in faith, hope, and love. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. You have put away lying.

There is no deceit. You are looking out for each other's interests. You have that mind that was in Christ Jesus.

Greater love hath no man than this, than to put his life on the line for his friend. Lay his life down for his friend. For his friend.

For his neighbor. For his one another. Got to pay attention to the details.

The world isn't going to know we're Christians because we come out and sell all our goods and just throw the money into the wind for anybody to pick up. They will know we are Christians by our love for one another. One another love.

Intelligent love. Disciplined love. Love that sometimes reflects itself in denying a request instead of fulfilling it.

Especially when it comes to children. So, faith, hope, and love. Faith is the means.

Our confidence in the truth of God's Word. Our confidence in Jesus Christ Himself who is the embodiment of the Word, the embodiment of the truth. Our trust is in Him.

That is the means of living a life that pleases God, is faith. Why should we bother? If we're motivated by monetary gain, we're going to invest our time in watching the stock market, looking over investments, trying to find new ways to multiply our money, buy this piece of property, wait for it to appreciate, sell it, try to catch the peak, buy in the dip, sell at the peak, watch those investments, read all of the gurus and the people that are in the know and who's got a track record of prediction and all of that because my goal is to maximize the money and the investment and the capital that I gain in this life. Houses and barns, fields upon fields, if that's my goal, that's what motivates me.

And my motivation determines how I spend my time, how I set my goals, how I define my values, what constitutes my priority in any given time, in any given moment, in any given day, right? What is our motivation? Why do we live a life of faith? Because we have a confident hope, a confident expectation, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, the things of this world are going to grow strangely dim. Why not sacrifice that which you cannot keep to gain that which you can never lose, as it has been well put, right? So this is our motivation. We know the Lord Jesus is coming back.

We know there is a future kingdom of the Son followed by the kingdom of the Father. I want my citizenship card. I want one of these things I accidentally left on my belt.

It's an access card. This card is magic. I can go places with this card that nobody else can go.

Doors open for me. I wave this in front of a thing and there's a click and the door opens. I go inside and wave this in front of a sensor and the elevator will come down and get me and take me where I want to go.

Somebody doesn't have this card? That door does not open. That elevator does not come. And pretty soon the security guy is going to walk over and say, excuse me, sir, how come you don't have the card of righteousness? You need to leave.

We're going to throw you outside with the dogs and fornicators and all those who love and

practice a lie. Those who love and practice deception are outside the gates of the new. I want an access card for the new.

I want my house. I want my office. I want my entire place of operation to be inside the city that is built four square with the gates on each side named for the apostles named for the twelve tribes of Israel where the lamb is the light where the throne of God has the water of life flowing out from under it.

And there is a tree lined creek. You've seen the reflecting pool for the at the capital. There is a reflecting pool of the water of life coming out from under the throne.

I want to be able to go down there and have a picnic and casually pick the fruit of the tree of life. The changes every month, 12 months out of whatever constitutes a year up there. However, time works in that golden future.

I want to be in. That is my hope. That is your hope.

That's what motivates us. That's why we don't waste our time squirreling around here chasing ephemeral transient things. Go to Salvation Army.

Go to Goodwill. Go to an antique store. This is the detritus of past lives and past aggrandizement where people bought stuff new.

Now it's old. They had it all assembled and they gloried in it. It's all gone.

It has been auctioned off. It has been sold. It has been hauled away.

It was the end of a garage sale. People at the garage sale wouldn't take it and they hauled it down and left it outside the Salvation Army to be put on the shelves and sold for a pittance. Got a great coffee percolator from 1984 yesterday.

Brand spanking new. I bet that thing has never been used. Still had the little instruction thing up in the basket.

Brand spanking new. Unused. Old style percolator.

Twelve bucks. Somebody paid full retail for that back in the mid-80s and it sat and it sat. They died.

Somebody said, well, what anybody wants to take, what you don't want, we're hauling to the Salvation Army. Well, Sam now has their percolator. Who knew? Probably somebody's Christmas present.

Oh, what a wonderful day. Look at this. It's a \$50 percolator.

Well, now it's a \$12 percolator and I've got it. Transient, ephemeral things that do not last, that do not count. We have a hope.

So look at this now. We've got a breastplate in Thessalonians 5, 1 Thessalonians 5, 8. Those of us who are of the day, how many times have we seen this? Be sober. Be vigilant.

Your enemy, the devil, roams seeking whom he may devour, like a lion, right? Be sober. Be vigilant. Be sober.

Let us watch and be sober. He says that twice, verse 6 and verse 8. Did you notice? What is it to not be sober? What is it about un-sober people that's noticeable? They get kind of giddy and kind of hilarious. Things that wouldn't be funny in the cold light of day, they just find hysterical.

They can't stop laughing when they're not sober. They're amused and distracted by things. Reality doesn't really set in.

Do you know you're not really controlling your car very well? Do you know you're not really controlling your language very well? Do you know you're not really controlling what you say very well? You're not controlling your mind and your heart and your eyes. You're not controlling your decisions very well because you're not sober. You're not in full possession of your faculties.

And Paul says, be sober. Be clear-headed. Have a grip on reality here.

Twice, be sober. Let us be sober putting on the breastplate of faith and love. Faith, the means.

Love, the measure. And on our head as a helmet, the hope, the motivation of salvation both now and future. Deliverance.

Vindication. Justification. Now and in the future.

These three things have to characterize us as sober, daylight-dwelling people. We're not asleep. We're not giddy.

We're not inebriated. We are clear. We are sharp.

We are focused. We know exactly what we're doing. Well, once again, I ask the question, breastplate of faith and love.

And in Ephesians 6, it is the breastplate of righteousness. Well, if I say righteousness and I don't want it to be abstract, what is righteousness? The source of it, I lay hold of righteousness how? By faith. How do I express righteousness? In love.

Its origination and source is faith. Its expression and outworking is love. So, how different is a breastplate of righteousness from a breastplate of faith and love? They are the same.

But it is so helpful to get these two descriptions and see that this thing has got, it's like the Medo-Persian Empire. Remember the image and the vision of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's explaining it? He says, well, the head of gold, that's you, pal. And when you shuffle off the mortal coil, you're going to be followed by the shoulders.

And that's the Medes and the Persians. Right here, it's the thorax. It's the abdominal section of the vision, right? And it's twin.

It's double. And the breastplate of righteousness has, it's like a two-cylinder motorcycle engine. Faith, love.

You can't overdo the faith at the expense of love. You can't overdo the love at the expense of faith. And many well-intentioned Christians are so anxious to be loving, it's not guided by knowledge.

And therefore, it isn't the expression of faith. It's the expression of sincerity. It's the expression of a desire to do good without the knowledge.

They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge. And much of the effort winds up being misplaced and misguided, and it causes as much heartache and destruction as any good that it tries to obtain. You can spoil a child with too much love, and not enough recognition of the need for a grip on reality, and an understanding of what truth is.

So, breastplate of righteousness, so helpful that he put this over in Thessalonians. It's the breastplate of faith and love. Faith is the source and the means.

Love is the outworking and the measure. You think you're righteous? Think you're righteous because you've, you know, been studying the Word of God? Think you're righteous because you do one thing or another? Righteousness is measured in the level of faith and the level of love. And the two are added together.

This is like a cumulative score. This is like what happens when you take the GRE or you take any other of these evaluation tests. They add different sections together.

You take the GRE, they've got the, you know, the sort of mathematical analytical side, and they've got the expression and linguistic side. You get the kind of English, and you've got to write an essay. They take different areas to measure, and then they add those together for your total score in many cases.

Well, your total score on righteousness is composed of faith and love. And, of course, you're not going to have either one of those if you're not genuinely motivated by the hope of salvation, to which we turn here. Having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and to put this breastplate on, we know how to do this now, don't we? Well, during

my armor check, if I'm going to check about the breastplate of righteousness, I can't just fool myself and say, well, I'm a good man.

Remember the rich young ruler? Oh, all these I've done for my youth. Eh, not so fast. Let's check the faith aspect.

Have I been diligent in exposure to the Word of God, meditation on, reflection on, implementation of the Word of God in my life, shining the light of the Word of God on my soul, plowing that field so that the Word of God can sink deep and produce its 30-fold, 60-fold, hopefully 100-fold fruit? That's whether I've got the righteousness on as a breastplate or not. And is it expressing itself? Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. Remember where that's from? What's our chapter on love? 1 Corinthians 13, right? The love chapter.

It's not the love boat, it's the love chapter. 1 Corinthians 13. What's your faith chapter? Hebrew is what? Double one.

Hebrew is 11. Breastplate of righteousness is the breastplate of faith and love, and we've got wonderful, convenient summaries of what those are in 1 Corinthians 13 and Hebrews 11. Got a quick drumstick there, a good piece of meat that you can chew into when you need to check on the breastplate of righteousness.

So, having girded your waist, having put on the breastplate, verse 15, having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Oh, my goodness, what is the preparation of the gospel of peace? Does this mean we're all evangelists and I've got to be ready to put on my shoes and walk out the door and pass out tracts and accost people and say, hey, are you saved? You don't look saved to me. Let me share Christ with you.

You're hell-bound and far be it from me that I should get to glory and find out that I saw you, met you, ran across you, bought something from you, impinged on you in some way, and I didn't stop the wheels and impose the message of salvation on you. Is that what the preparation of the gospel? Put on your shoes. Countless times.

World without end. This is how this has been interpreted in the past. Not what it means.

We start with the word preparation. He toimadzo. H-E-T-O-I-M-A-Z-O.

He toimadzo. The word does mean to prepare. It's the word Jesus used when he said go into the city, find the guy with the water jug, follow him, tell him the master has need, and prepare a place for us to eat what will become famously known as the Last Supper.

Remember that? I go to prepare a place for you. He toimadzo. Prepare.

But its roots in classical Greek are very helpful here because it does mean to prepare, and it means to prepare here. But the aspect of preparation, what it originally meant was to lay a

foundation for. Go lay a foundation for the meal.

I go to lay a foundation for a place for you. It means to establish the ability of a thing to happen. It has the idea of picking a site for a thing and ensuring that it's going to be able of fulfillment.

It's going to be capable of fulfillment. That's the background of the word. And it retains that force everywhere you see it used.

So you have the preparation, meaning the establishment. Now, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Why are the shoes, wouldn't everything need preparation? Don't you need to prepare to put on the breastplate, prepare to put on the belt? Why is it associated with these shoes? The sandals, actually, that were worn by the hoplites in the Roman army started out as regular sandals, but they were then prepared for battle.

This is like in the modern day, we take shoes and we put cleats on them to prepare to race, to prepare to play football, to prepare for some sport where you really need a lot of traction. Well, it is the same in the ancient world. To be able to use these large shields and the spears and to be able to not lose your footing, they had special sandals that were prepared for battle by hammering nails into the sole to what essentially became cleats.

And there was an extra piece of leather that was put over the arch of the foot, the exposed part, so that if a sword slips or if a spear point falls or if you drop something like a shield, it's kind of like steel-toed boots today. They had a special piece of leather added to their sandals to protect the top of their feet for battle. So the bottom of the sandal has been prepared in advance.

I know I'm going to need traction. I'm going to make sure I've got these hobnails, if you will. I know that there's a chance the top of my foot could be injured because of all of this metal going on here and struggle and opposition in battle with weapons and shields and pieces of armor and who knows what all.

So I've got the top of my sandal prepared in advance for that. It's the cleat. It is the steel-toed boot rolled into one.

This is the combat boot. And the preparation means I've got to take my civilian shoes and turn them into hoplite sandals. I, in advance, have to remember that somebody's going to try to knock me off my feet, make me lose my footing, make me not walk where I need to walk, march where I need to march, advance to where I need to advance, hold the ground that I need to hold.

Stand fast. Stand firm. Stand firm, everyone.

Gird your armor on, right? We sang many wonderful hymns this morning on the armor of God, and, of course, Sound the Battle Cry is another one. Gird your armor on. Stand firm, everyone.

How do you stand firm? You've got these sandals. Okay, well, so that's the preparation. Now,

what is the gospel of peace? Gospel is just good news, and it has become synonymous in our day with evangelism.

What is the good news? What is the heart of the good news? What is it that we tell people when we share the gospel in the modern day? We've come to change the meaning of the word. Well, the gospel is evangelism. No, the gospel is the message.

And what is the content of the message? The content of the message doesn't go away and have no pertinence once we're saved. It's still the good news. We live the good news.

And what is the good news? Peace with God. Peace with one another. What does it mean in practical terms? How can I prepare these sandals and get them on my feet as I put on the armor? What does it actually mean? We tend to be troubled in adversity.

And the nature of that troubled heart tends to be expecting bad things are going to happen. I am going to have a real problem here. I don't see how I'm going to get out of this mess.

It may be of my own making. It may have come from the outside. But this is going to be a real difficulty here.

This is going to mess up my life something awful. That's the nature. What does Jesus tell the disciples on the eve of the crucifixion? Let not your hearts be troubled.

You trust God. You trust me. Peace I give you.

My peace I leave with you. Not as the world gives. I'm sending you a comforter.

The para kalas. Para kleitas. Called alongside.

What do these people do that come alongside a wounded or injured or medically needy person? They comfort. They pacify. Screaming baby.

I'm a pacifier. Peace. Settle down.

It's going to be okay. Peace. The stabilizing influence on us as believers as we work our way through the day.

And we start to become troubled. Remember when Paul writes Thessalonians. What does he say? Don't let anyone trouble you or disturb your mind as though the day of the Lord has come already.

Don't be troubled. Comfort one another with these words about that day will not come. Remember I told you these things when I was with you? Settle down.

Relax. Peace. A big part of our stability.

A big part of our ability to wear and employ and take advantage of this armor is to not get knocked off our feet by being troubled. What is the tribulation? It is the time of Jacob's trouble. Do not be troubled.

Do not be knocked off your feet in your minds as though the day of the Lord has come already. That day will not come. You're okay.

You've got the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit that prevents until He is taken out of the way. Then the man of sin will be revealed.

Then there's going to be dark days. We are not of the night or of the darkness. That day is not going to overtake you like a thief.

We are in the day. Walk as children of light. Walk as children of light on your sandals of preparation of peace.

The peace that God gives us, the peace that Jesus leaves us is good news. Good news. You say, well, I'm putting my armor.

Have you ever seen or read accounts of the guys that were getting ready for D-Day? And they're getting ready to get into the mic boats. They're getting ready to go ashore and be cut to pieces by sheets of lead flying through the air. And everybody is anxious and everybody is troubled.

You say, well, I'm putting my armor on and getting ready for battle. I'm going up against forces of darkness and heavenly places and all the rest of it. Wow, I'm nervous.

I'm tense here. I'm clenching up. I'm really worried about this.

Paul says, look, before you take a step, before you attempt to stand, get those sandals. What's between you and the ground? What's going to keep your feet on the ground? Peace. It's good news.

There's good news in this conflict. In this world, Jesus said, you're going to have trouble. Remember that? In this world, ye shall have tribulation.

Remember? You're going to have trouble. But what does he say after that? But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

You're going to have trouble, but you're going to be at peace because I've already won the victory. I've already taken this ground. All you've got to do is stand on it, on your feet, the sandals that you have prepared.

You think about this. You run it through your mind. You remind yourself.

You go through your memory verses. You remember the things you learned in Bible class. You

aim faith at it.

You express love from it. You maintain your hope of deliverance now and in the future. God will never suffer the righteous to be moved.

And that good news puts combat boots on your feet of peace. You stand on the peace that Jesus leaves with us and that he gives us, not like the world. We have a supernatural peace.

It doesn't come in a pill. It doesn't come out of a bottle. It's the peace that passes understanding.

Your feet shod with the preparation. You've got to get this done in advance. You've got to have this peace.

Don't lose your peace. Don't sacrifice your peace. Don't give up your peace.

Don't let anyone take away your peace. Don't hand a defeated enemy your peace that Jesus won on the cross. Don't hand away the fruit of victory.

That's how we have to look at it. We're struggling against unseen forces. Don't let them take your peace.

Jesus won it. He gave it to us. It's the fruit of victory.

Stand on it. That's the idea here. Well, verse 16, next time, we're going to see above all.

Add on to that. This is a great start and a great foundation, but we're going to add to that. And we'll look at what we add on next time.

But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for these tremendous resources that have been granted to us as the fruit of victory of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

We are the first fruits of those who believe. We know that Israel is going to receive the benefit of these victorious gifts in the age to come, but we have them now. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will remind us of who we are in Christ, what our potentials and opportunities are, and as we abide in the calming and energizing presence of your spirit, we will truly take up these pieces of spiritual armor and wear them, wear them with pride, wear them in a way that reflects your glory and vindicates the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.