

August 2015

From the Pastor



Wearing the Right Shoes

As most

Early this month our son Ryan is going on a camping excursion that will include all sorts of hiking in the Adirondacks. He has been given very clear instructions as to the kind of shoes to bring on this trip.

Lightweight hiking boots: One of the most important pieces of equipment you will bring. The fit is very important! For mountain patrols, boots should extend above the ankle and be either leather/fabric or all-leather with lug soles for traction. Boots should be waterproofed and fit comfortably with two pairs of socks (a light synthetic liner sock and a heavy wool sock). Make sure boots are broken in before you arrive; otherwise your feet will pay the price. Boots not broken in will invariably cause chafing and blisters. Leather/ nylon boots that extend over the ankle are sufficient for an expedition and loads of 40-60 pounds. All-leather boots are more waterproof and last longer, though are generally heavier and more expensive.¹



Shoes of Peace

¹ LaVida supplies.pdf, from <http://www.gordon.edu/lavida/college/forms>, accessed 7/19/15.

As we continue in our putting on of the Armor of God, we come to putting on our shoes. Ephesians 6:15 also tells us what to put on our feet.

Ephesians 6:15 *...and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. (ESV)*

To be a warrior in the eternal battle against that darkness of this world, you and I need to be ready with the gospel. This means we need to be able to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Sharing the gospel can be as simple as telling someone how you became a Christian and how Jesus has changed your life and inviting someone to know Him like you know Him. However, it helps to have a theology of salvation to know the scriptural basis for why someone should be a believer and how they can come to know Jesus.

Here is a list of verses I use when I am sharing the gospel with someone. Please note the order of the verses.

John 10:10b *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (ESV)*

I tell people I'm talking with that God wants us all to experience an abundant life, a life that is wonderfully full. I ask if they see people experiencing this. They usually say, "No." Then I ask, "Why is that?" I then share the next verse.

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (ESV)*

I say that the reason people don't experience an abundant life is because we all sin. I ask them if they think I've ever sinned, and then I ask them if they have ever sinned. I may have to explain what sin is, but usually people know what sin is. After that, I show them the next verse.

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)*

I tell them that there is a cost to sin. That cost is death. I then explain that this is not physical, because then we would all physically die after we have committed our first sin. I explain that this is a spiritual death, that we are spiritually dead to God because of sin. We are so separated from God that it is like being dead to Him. However, there will a time when we will physically die. That's when I tell them this verse.

Hebrews 9:27 *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, (ESV)*

I mention that we all are going to die and that many people try to do all sorts of good things to outweigh the bad stuff they do, because they know when we die we will come face to face with God. They think the act of doing good will get them into heaven. However, there is a problem with this thinking. That's when I give them the next verse.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,* ⁹ *not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (ESV)*

These two verses tell us that no one can do good enough to be acceptable to God. We are saved through faith, so that puts us in a very desperate situation. We are sinners who will be judged by God for our sin. We will fail, and there's nothing we can do about it on our own. God knows that. I then tell them this verse.

Romans 5:8 *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (ESV)*

I explain that God knows our situation and that He loves us very much, so much that He offered His Son for us to die for our sins. There had to be a way for our sins to be dealt with. There had to be a punishment for our wrongdoing, and Jesus took that punishment. That being the case, I then ask, "Why isn't everyone a Christian if Jesus died for everyone?" That is when I share this verse.

John 5:24 *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. (ESV)*

I explain there are three things that happen when you become a Christian. You have eternal life; you will not come into judgment (because Jesus took the judgment); and you pass from death to life. In other words, you pass from eternal death, being hell, to eternal life, which is heaven. However, there are two things we have to do to become believers that are mentioned in this verse. First, you have to hear God's word of salvation. I explain this is what is happening right now, because I am sharing God's word. Second, they have to believe. This means they accept they are sinners with all its ramifications and that the only way to escape punishment for their sins is to trust Jesus died for their sins. They also need to accept that what Jesus did was enough. I give this final verse to explain a little more what it means to believe.

Revelation 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. (ESV)*

I tell them that Jesus is standing at the door of each of their hearts, and all they need to do is open that door and let Jesus into their hearts. They give Jesus their hearts, and from that moment on, they are no longer living for themselves. Now Jesus is controlling their hearts.

That is one way to "put on the right pair of shoes" to share the gospel. It is a great tool I have used many times in telling people about God. Something that may help you lead someone to Christ with these verses is to simply remember John 10:10, and have your Bible you have prepped before hand. I recommend to go to your Bible now and next to John 10:10, write the next verse, "Romans 3:23." Then turn to Romans 3:23 to write the next reference verse next to it and so on and so forth. Do this for all the verses. Now you have an easy way to walk someone through the message of the gospel, and all you have to remember is John 10:10.

Someone also told me about another tool, an app by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship called *The Big Story*. It has a tutorial that will help you share the message of Jesus by using this app. It's another great tool to "wear on your feet!"

My hope is for you to be "well shod" to share the gospel at any time with anyone. Remember the words of Peter who said,

1 Peter 3:15 *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)*

In Him and for His glory,

