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## **Message: The Year of Living Dangerously – Feet Fitted**

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This is the last week of our series on the armor of God from Eph 6. It's about the fact that we're all, as followers of Jesus, in a spiritual battle. There's more going on than what meets the eye or what's right at the surface. There's a deep spiritual battle going on with an enemy that seeks to destroy, and if we're going to stand to the end in the battle we'll need supernatural protection against his attacks and supernatural weaponry to take the fight to him. Let's jump in **Ephesians 6:13-17**. So far we've covered all the armor, except...

### **Shield of faith and helmet of salvation**

The shield and the helmet were necessary components of Roman armor. The shield looked very similar to this (shield). It was used to stop arrows. In the spiritual battle, faith is our shield against attacks of the enemy.

Biblical faith is the assurance that you can believe God and trust his promises, no matter what.

**Hebrews 11:1, Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

In the spiritual battle, the enemy wants you to lose faith. When times get tough, he throws arrows at your faith, *'see you can't really trust God. See, he's not really there. See this is all just about religion, it's not real.'*

And your defense is the shield of faith. 'No, no enemy, my God has been faithful from eternity past, he will be faithful in eternity forward, and he's not about to stop now. Even if I can't understand why this thing is happening to me right now, even though I can't make sense of it...I still believe. I still have faith that my God knows what he's doing, nothing is out of his control, and every single one of his promises will come to pass. That's the shield of faith that stops the arrows of the evil one. Then we're given the helmet of salvation

### **Shield of faith and helmet of salvation**

The Roman helmet obviously protected the head from injury. Maybe some of you remember the Monday night football game when the Cowboys were playing the Eagles and Jason Whitten got his helmet knocked off but he kept going for about another 30 yards without his helmet. John Madden said, 'if you can do that you're one tough football player.' Playing football without a helmet is crazy. Doing battle with a spiritual enemy without the helmet of salvation is crazier.

Biblical salvation is when a person places their faith in Jesus Christ and by God's grace is no longer an object of wrath, but a child of the king. At the point of salvation the person literally crosses over from death to life. It is the greatest need of every person on this planet and every person in this room.

**Ephesians 2:1-8.** We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus, and when we're saved we've literally crossed over from death to life, and that life is life eternal. This is no bigger issue. There is no greater need than salvation. I hope you understand the term 'saved' is not some corny Christian tag from the 60's. It's biblical, and you need it.

Have you ever noticed you can talk about faith and never really offend people? But the moment you talk about being saved, everything changes. You'll immediately sense a defensive posture on their part. They might respond with something like, 'I'm not that kind of Christian.' Like, 'I'm a Christian, but not the saved kind.' We're going to talk about salvation today and I hope every person in here understands their need to be the saved kind of Christian.

Now, can I just say this, when it comes to salvation a lot of the old school preachers tended to emphasize the one time conversion experience, then the end when Christ returns. They were big on the beginning and the end of the faith story. More recently, Christians tend to emphasize what it looks like to daily live as people of faith as citizens of the kingdom in the here and now. They emphasize more the middle of the story. The truth is they're both right, they're just each emphasizing different parts of the story. But if I can get permission from the people of Mission, I think we need to go old school today. Because here's the thing, while the old school gospel emphasized part of the story, the beginning and the end, that's a pretty important part. I think it's the part we most need to hear today. So people of Mission can we go old school for the remainder of this message?

**There is a moment of salvation...** The salvation of a person begins at the moment in time when the person goes from unbelief to belief, from darkness to light, from object of God's wrath to saved by God's grace, from death to life. There is a starting point of salvation for every follower of Jesus, and that starting point is faith in the risen Lord Jesus, **Ephesians 2:8**.

Just like salvation has a beginning, there's also an end coming for each of us when we'll leave this life and meet the Lord, and you better be prepared for that moment. You better be saved because there's no negotiating at that point. People of Mission, we have all sinned. We have all rebelled against God in many ways. We have all earned nothing short of the wrath of God. And your greatest need and my greatest need is salvation.

I want us to see the urgency of salvation, so please turn with me to Acts 16...

**Acts 16:16-18a.** The apostle Paul and Silas were traveling in the city of Philippi, telling people the gospel, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. And something very strange happened. There was this slave girl, possessed by some spirit that gave her the unique capacity to predict future events. Naturally the owners of this slave girl were stoked about that because she was a profit center for them.

One day she sees the apostle Paul and Silas walking along the road, and she starts following them shouting. *"These men are from God, telling you the way to be saved!!"* That was not helpful for their ministry, having some demon possessed fortune teller shouting out their intentions everywhere they went. I mean if you read the context, Paul and Silas were sort of flying under the radar, going outside the city gate to the place of prayer, trying to figure out who's open to spiritual things so they could tell them the good news, but everywhere they went there's this slave girl making a huge stink. You go to tell someone about Jesus, and there's this demon possessed fortune teller standing there, like, *"he's gonna tell you the way of salvation. Just wait, here comes the good part, here it comes."* They went to the market to get a pomegranate, and there she is. *"Hey Everybody, these guys here, right here in aisle nine, they're servants of the most high God, telling you the way to be saved!"* They go

to the bathroom. She's waiting right outside the door. *"Hey everyone, that guy that just walked into the bathroom, he's here to tell you how to be saved!"* Can you imagine how old that got?

I don't know if you've ever been shouted at by a demon possessed woman. I have, when I was in college. I was sitting there in the middle of this packed railroad station in Manhattan, minding my own business when the woman sitting across from me raises her head stares right at me and starts yelling "that man right there murdered my baby! Murderer!" (tell the rest of the story).

I'm telling you, having this slave girl following Paul and Silas around, shouting these things out was disturbing. And she kept it up for 'many days.' So Paul couldn't take it any longer, **v. 18b**. Paul's like, 'enough devil woman! In the name of Jesus, shut your pie hole!' Actually, he doesn't talk to her at all. He addresses the evil spirit in her and commands that spirit to come out of the girl. And by the power of Jesus the spirit had to flee. A good reminder for every Christian battling something right now...he that is within you is stronger than he that is within the world. If you'll lean on the power of Christ, and not on your own strength you have far greater power than the enemy. You don't have to be a slave to that thing, you can be free in Christ...amen.

You can imagine how excited the owners were about that. At the command of the apostle Paul, their money well just dried up. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and brought them to the police, **vv.19-24**.

After being beaten to a pulp, Paul and Silas are thrown in prison and the jailer was instructed to make sure they didn't get out. For extra measure he put them in the most secure cell, and he put them in chains. The jailer knew, if there was any trouble with these guys he'd pay for it with his life, so he wasn't taking any chances.

**vv. 25**, amazing faith. You know our best opportunities to make Jesus known isn't when all is well, it's when you're in a painful situation. These guys are beaten, jailed and in chains, and still they're praising God, and the other prisoners were listening, witnessing authentic life changing faith in the storm.

**vv. 26-30**, God miraculously breaks the chains and opens the prison doors. And when the jailer sees it he thinks he's done for. If those guys escaped it would mean his death. So he decides I'm just going to get this over right now, and he goes to fall on his sword. The jailer came face to face with death and in that moment listen to what he asks, ***"what must I do to be saved?"*** That jailer understood he wasn't prepared to meet God yet, and he wanted to fix that right now. 'Just tell me what I have to do to be saved and I'll do it.'

In that moment, when you've staring death in the face, you realize the urgency of salvation. There's no time to play games, no place for pride, no more 'I don't need God.' In that moment you understand the urgency of salvation.

My wife is a flight attendant and she can have a plane full of people completely indifferent to God, going about their day traveling, not at all interested in God, not open to spiritual discussions whatsoever, and she can bring just about everyone in that plane to their knees begging for salvation, with three simple words. All she has to do is take that intercom and say, 'we're going down.' And every agnostic in the place would be crying out for Jesus to save them. They'd all become

theologians in that moment. Just like the Philippian jailer, when you realize you may be moments from meeting the Lord, all of a sudden salvation is priority #1.

I hope we all realize, we're all heading toward that moment. It may be a prolonged period of laying in a hospital bed hooked up to machines gasping for air. It may be quick and completely unexpected.

This past Thursday night Lt. Eric Shuhandler, was performing a routine traffic stop at the intersection of baseline and val vista. Something he did hundreds of time before. But this time as the officer walked to the vehicle the passenger opened fire and killed him. Tragic, and completely unexpected. You never know when your time will come, all you can know for sure is, it's coming. So you better be prepared to meet the Lord. Ask the right question now... ***'what must I do to be saved...right now?'***

Listen, if the guy who rose from the dead is right, and I'd bank on that, there really is a literal heaven and a literal hell, and every one of us will spend eternity in one or the other. For those who chose to believe and follow Jesus, we have the promise of a glorious eternal inheritance in the kingdom of our king. For those who chose to go their own way rather than believe and follow Jesus, they get exactly what they asked for, and eternity apart from God, and apart from every good blessing. You may think hell will be sort of like life as we know it right now. No, you and I experience the blessings of God's grace every day. We experience beauty in nature and in people. We experience kindness from God and others. Every good gift we experience is from the Lord. A life apart from him and all his blessings will be a hellish, empty, dark, meaningless existence, to be feared. The question on the lips of everyone in this room should be, ***'what must I do to be saved?'***

Here's the answer, **vv. 31-34**. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Paul put it this way in Ephesians 2, 'you are saved by God's grace through \_\_\_\_\_. And this not from yourself, it is the gift of God.' We want to make it harder, but God wants to give you a gift. But to receive it, you have to believe. You have to stop trusting in yourself or anyone other than Jesus to be right with God. Jesus is the only way.

**Acts 4:12, Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** Jesus is the only one who died for your sins, he's the only risen Lord. He wants to save you from your sin, from an empty, dark, meaningless existence and into the kingdom of God. But he requires one thing of you, faith. Faith in him as your Lord, as your rescuer. People of Mission, you must be saved. All I can do is point you to the one who saves, you have to believe. **Believe and be saved now!**

**Prayer.** Listen to the testimony of those who have been saved. Sing songs of worship, and don't leave this room without personally answering the question, ***what must I do to be saved?***