

The Breastplate of Righteousness

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AM Service

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Text: [Ephesians 6:10-18](#)

Introduction

We have been studying the great truth of spiritual battle that we believers are in. Whether you know it or not, whether you like it or not, you and I, the moment we repent and believe the Gospel, have been enlisted into God's army. Being a soldier we must fight a good fight of faith. To be a good soldier of the cross we must first of all, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. But it is not enough to be strong and courageous, we must also be properly armed in order to fight this spiritual battle. Paul outlined for us here in chapter six of Ephesians the tremendous power and resources we have as Christians. God knows that in order to win the battle, His army must be well-armed and well-protected as we daily engaged in spiritual hand to hand combat. And thank God, He provided the armour for us. It is a six-piece armour, namely, belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword.

Two things we must understand

First, we must understand **God's divine provision**. Note that it is called the armour of God. It is called the armour of God for a reason. It is called the armour of God because it is God-provided armour. It is not an armor that you and I constructed. Rather, it is an armour that has been constructed by God and provided by God.

Secondly, we must understand **our personal responsibility**. We must put on the armour of God. It is our duty, it is our responsibility before God. No one else is going to do this for us.

God has made it available, now you have to put it on. God will not put it on for you. Your parents cannot do it for you. They cannot even do it for you with their prayers. This is something each and everyone of us are responsible to do. We must put on the whole armour of God.

Last Sunday we looked at the piece of armour that a Roman soldier would put on first, before entering the battlefield - the belt. We noted just as the physical belt secures everything in place, the belt of truth secures our minds, establishes our minds so that we are not tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. This is where it begins. We must gird up our minds with truth. We must surround our mind with truth like a belt. We must know the truth, believe the truth, meditate upon the truth, love the truth and obey the truth.

Today, we come to the second piece of the armour - the breastplate of righteousness.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

After a Roman soldier put on the belt of truth, what he would put on next is the breastplate.

I - The Physical Breastplate

It would help us if we understand what was the breastplate that the Roman soldiers wore in Paul's days? In Paul's days a Roman soldier wore breastplate. It is generally made of iron, though some wealthier soldiers may have worn a bronze breastplate. The breastplate was a central part of the Roman soldier's armour. It provided protection for the soldier's body. It covered his heart, his lungs, his kidneys and other vital organs. It shielded the soldier's chest, and stomach from the blows of other soldiers whether it be a sword or spear or an arrow. Without a breastplate, a soldier would be asking for death, as any attack could instantly become fatal. With a sturdy breastplate, the very same attacks become ineffective and useless, as blows glance off the armor.

This piece of the armour was absolutely essential for any soldier. No Roman soldier in his right mind would ever go into a battle without his breastplate. For a soldier to enter the battle without the breastplate and unprotected in the chest area would be suicidal.

II - The Spiritual Breastplate

The breastplate is critically important piece of the armour to any Roman soldier and it is a critically important piece in the Christian life. As it would be suicidal for any soldier to enter into the battlefield without the breastplate on, so it would be suicidal for any Christian to enter the spiritual battle without the breastplate of righteousness.

Without the breastplate of righteousness, we leave ourselves open to Satan's attacks and almost certain defeat.

Now, **what is the righteousness that Paul speaks of?** There are basically two kinds of righteousness. The first kind of righteousness is the **imputed righteousness**. This is the righteousness that we receive the moment we believe. A **right standing** before God. We are made to be in the right standing before God through the perfect righteousness of Christ when we by faith put our trust in Him. The second kind of righteousness is the **imparted righteousness**. Having received and declared righteousness through the merit of God's dear Son Jesus Christ, we now pursue holiness and practice righteousness as we live our daily Christian life. A **right living** before God and men.

This is what I believe the righteousness that Paul is referring to. He is not referring to the justification by faith. He is not referring to the righteousness that we receive at our justification. That would make no sense because when God declared us righteous, that already happened and that is a permanent once and for all reality. He is not referring to our standing before God but rather he is referring to our walk before God. He is referring to the righteous living of a believer who has already been in the right standing before God.

After you put on the belt of truth now put on the breastplate of righteousness. This means **to live out the truth that you have now come to know, believe, meditate and love**. To put on the breastplate of righteousness is to practice the truth in your daily living. It is not enough merely to gird our loins with truth. We must put on the breastplate of righteousness which speaks of **right living**.

Paul in the same letter gives us what right living looks like. How does right living manifest itself? It manifest itself in the following:

1. In our Words

Ephesians 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Right living consists of speaking the truth. We must speak what is truth to each other. We should never lie to one another.

Colossians 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

If we lie we are opening ourselves up to the assault of the devil. When we lie we are speaking the language of the devil. Let truth control your speech.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

The very words that should come out our mouth should be righteous and edifying. It should be right words.

What happens when we let corrupt communication proceed our of our mouth?

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

When we let corrupt communication proceed our of our mouth the Holy Spirit of God is grieved.

Ephesians 5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

This is the practical righteousness of which Paul speaks.

Ephesians 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Colossians 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Ephesians 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6: Let no man de-

ceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7: Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8: For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

2. In our Attitude

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Here is a command to be angry. It is possible to be angry and yet not sin. We should be angry with sin in our own lives. We should be angry with sin in the lives of others for what it does to them and how it hurts the testimony of Christ. We should be righteously angry when babies are being killed in the womb. We should be rightly angry with the sin that we see in the world. But it begins with our own lives.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

There is logical progression - from one sin and it grows to the next level. Bitterness when it is allowed to go unconfessed and unrepented of at some point it becomes wrath and that wrath expresses itself with anger and then there is clamor and it becomes verbalized in slander.

3. In our Relationships

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

These are righteous attitudes.

Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

4. In our Deeds and Actions

There must be sexual purity.

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

There must be honest work and diligence.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

To be out on the breastplate of righteousness means to have a strong work ethic and to be a hard working. These are practical godly living.

What happens when we fail to live in this way?

What happens when we fail to live right. This does not mean to live perfectly. There is no one here this morning that is perfect. This is not speaking of the perfection of our lives, but it speaks about the direction of our lives. The direction and pursuit of our lives must live right before God and before man. If we fail to do this in our daily Christian living, we are like a soldier going

into the battlefield without a breastplate. We enter the battlefield without any protection and we are vulnerable to the enemy's assault and attack.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27: Neither give place to the devil.

Do not give the devil an opportunity. When there is an unrighteous anger within us and we nourish it and harbor it, we give the devil place in our heart for his activity. If we do not put on this breastplate of righteousness then we are giving the devil an opportunity.

"The practical daily righteousness becomes the spiritual breastplate. Lack of holiness on the other hand leaves us vulnerable to the great enemy of our souls." - John MacArthur

"In this context Paul is urging those who are already Christians to put on God's armour. If they are Christians they have already been clothed with God's righteousness in the first place. Therefore the only thing that they can put on is practical holiness expressed in righteous thoughts and deeds." - James Montgomery Boice

"Spiritually the breastplate is the devout and holy life. It is moral rectitude. Apart from such a life the Christian has no defense against Satan's accusations." - William Hendrickson

III - The Practical Admonition

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

This morning as you come to church do you have the breastplate of righteousness on? Are you fully protected? Are there areas in your life in which you are tolerating sin which unfortunately leaves yourself very vulnerable to the devil?

How do we put on this breastplate?

Psalm 119:172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.
173: Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

God's commandments are righteousness and we can put on this breastplate of righteousness by living out God's commandments in our lives.

Where do we begin since the commandment of God is ...

Psalm 119:96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

There is a Chinese proverb that says "*the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.*" We live out the broad commandment of God by taking one step at a time. The journey to put on the breastplate of righteousness begins with a single choice. Begin by choosing to make your next choice a righteous one. Every word, attitude, relationship and action must be brought in line with the righteous words and commandments of God. And we can only do this with God's grace.

Psalm 119:172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.
173: Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

One day, the war we are fighting will be over. And when it is, we are promised,
[Isaiah 32:17](#) **And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.**

By faithfully living out God's way and by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, we will find this peace, quietness and assurance—forever.

This morning if you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Saviour, I invite you to come to Him. This is where you start. If you put your faith and trust completely and solely in Christ, He will remove your guilt and sin and He will clothe you with His very own righteousness.

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) **For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

O, come to Christ and you will have the right standing before now and forever!

AMEN!