

“THE ARMOR OF GOD” (Part 3)

“...breastplate of righteousness”

Eph. 6:14

INTRO: The Christian life is not easy. It's a battle we must be expecting. God has provided the resources we need. Depend on His power (v. 10) and Dress in His armor (v. 11).

REVIEW: “... the belt of truth” (v. 14a) – Committed knowing and living the truth. **TODAY**, second piece of defensive armor, “the breastplate of righteousness.” No Roman soldier in his right mind would ever enter battle without his breastplate. It protected him not only in hand-to-hand combat but also from unexpected arrows. The soldier must not only have his loins girded up (ready, prepared, and committed) serious about battle (to win), but he must also protect his vital areas.

I. THE PICTURE (PIC) —

Roman soldiers had various kinds of breastplates. The most common on was the molded metal chest plate. It went all the way from the back of the neck to the top of thigh, thus covering and protecting the vital organs in these areas.

II. THE PRIORITY —

It is almost impossible to prioritize the armor, since we are to “put on the whole...” Each piece has its assigned function. However, the key is the breastplate of righteousness. WHY? If there's no righteousness in your life, you're not going to be committed, and ... other pieces. What is “righteousness?” Righteousness is being rightly related to God – unless you and God are right the remaining armor is of no effect. It is only when you and God are right that commitment takes place.

III. THE PROTECTION —

In the battles that a Roman soldier faced, the most vital area to protect was from the neck base to upper thighs. The head wasn't that exposed since the swords were short (not good for chopping off heads) The breastplate protected two crucial areas in the soldier's midsection:

1. *HEART (mind)* – symbolically to Jew as the mind (Pro. 23:7; Mk. 7:21; Jer. 17:9) – the thinking process.
2. *BOWELS (emotions)* – the lower abdominal area where the Jews saw the seat of emotions ... We ache in our stomach when certain emotions are felt.

SATAN'S ATTACK:

He attacks believers in two vital areas: 1) in our thinking and 2) the way to respond emotionally. He wants to cloud our thinking with lies and false doctrine, and to solicit evil responses from our emotions. In putting mind and emotions together, they encompass everything that moves us to action – no wonder Satan attacks – But, HOW does he?

1. *attacks the mind* – snatch away truth to plant lies – wants you to become tolerate of sin (laugh at sin) on the TV, music
2. *weakens conscience* – to sear it so cannot warn you
3. *breaks down your will* –
4. *corrupts our desires* – for wrong things
5. *confuse emotions* – love wrong things

BUT when we have on our breastplate these areas (mind and emotions) are covered and protected by righteousness!

IV. THE PROPER DEFINITION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. NOT the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20; Lk. 18:9-14). But the ...
- B. POSITIONAL (Perfect) RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST IMPARTED TO US AT SALVATION. Where we trust Christ He not only forgives our sin He gives us His righteousness – GREAT EXCHANGE! Our sin for His righteousness. We instantly are *positionally* righteous (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). Since salvation when God sees us, He sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ – Positionally, no matter what! (Phil. 3:9). We have the cover of Jesus clothing the book of our life! This righteousness enables ...
- C. PRACTICAL Righteousness where we live out our position – Process of sanctification is growing more holy as I grow in Christ. When we live holy, we have on the breastplate of righteousness. We must actively pursue righteousness in our daily lives (1 Jn. 3:10; Rev. 22:11; 1 Tim. 6:11; Eph. 4:24). We must consistently put on righteousness. Where we fail to do so becomes open game for enemy accusations leading to guilt and shame.

ILLUS: “Why don't we share our faith?” We may say, “I'm afraid,” or “I don't know how.” But research suggests the main reason is often this: the way we live. Gaps in godly living weaken our witness. God calls us to holiness. As Heine said, “Show me your redeemed life and I might believe in your Redeemer.” As followers of Christ and soldiers in His army, we must wear the breastplate of both positional and practical righteousness. We must live out what God has placed within us. We must pursue holiness. Moody quote... Without holiness . . .

CONC: What is the breastplate of righteousness? It is a righteous and holy life. It is the practicing of our positional righteousness daily. Personal holiness is the key! Godliness protects my mind and emotions. So, as Paul said, “Awake to righteousness and stop sinning.” (1 Cor. 15:34). We've got to put it on! I pray we'll be committed and be covered in true holiness – not with a paper armor, superficial substitute answer for a clear biblical solution. Satan only needs a little crack in the dam to burst it. Henry Stanley (Journalist) said, “It was not Livingstone's preaching that converted me, but Livingstone's living!”