

THE ARMOUR OF GOD - PART II

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Text: Ephesians 6:14b

Key Word: Righteousness

Key Thought: We Cannot Survive Without Christ's Righteousness in Our Lives

The second weapon of defence for the believer is the breastplate of righteousness. This is one form of protection that is often forgotten in spiritual warfare. **No believer can survive the subtle attacks of the enemy without this breastplate in its proper place.**

*** An illustration of a war that took place in Canada should help us to understand the principle of continuing to overcome the enemy.

In 1759 the Battle of Quebec took place between Great Britain and France. General Wolfe was declared the victor over General Montcalm.

But history shows us that it took many decades for that portion of North America to be totally possessed. There were many pockets of resistance that needed to be overcome. It was not until the 1830's that it could be said that the British crown had truly possessed and controlled the area. ***

Once we become a Christian, the enemy knows he has been defeated. The problem is that he doesn't give up attacking us in the areas of our weakest resistance. He seems to offer many "pockets of resistance" that we need to drive him from in order to live as an overcomer.

It is virtually impossible to survive the cunning attacks of our enemy without having the breastplate of righteousness in place.

Let Us Ask 4 Questions in Order to Better Understand How this Weapon of Our Spiritual Warfare Works.

- I. WHO DOES IT PROTECT?**
- II. WHAT DOES IT PROTECT?**
- III. WHEN DOES IT PROTECT?**
- IV. HOW DOES IT PROTECT?**

I. WHO DOES IT PROTECT?

The Apostle Paul made it very clear that he was addressing the saints at Ephesus, whom he called "the faithful in Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:1).

To make it very clear, Paul was writing to those who had asked forgiveness of their sins and were desiring to live a life that was pleasing to God. They had separated themselves from the things of this world and were striving to walk in a manner that was pleasing to God. They were those who respected and obeyed the Word of the Lord.

They were those who had received the love, grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. They had been washed in the blood of the Lamb and baptized in water. Many had also been baptized in the Holy Spirit. They had been made alive to Christ and dead to their former transgressions (Ephesians 2:5). They were seated together with Christ in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6)

These saints had left the world they had served and now directed their talents, strength and riches into the kingdom of God. They were those who were being daily fashioned into the image of Jesus Christ their Lord (Ephesians 2:10). They were those who were brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:13). They had passed beyond the dividing wall of hostility that had separated them from God (Ephesians 2:14).

They were,

*"no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,
20. built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."*

Ephesians 2:19,20

They were one body with one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:5). They were the children of light who had put off their former way of life and had put on the new self created in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24). They had been wakened from the dead and been filled with the Spirit and had learned to sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:14, 18,19).

II. WHAT DOES IT PROTECT?

The Roman breastplate generally extended from the base of the neck to the upper part of the thighs. It therefore, covers the thorax and abdomen.

It is clear that it would protect the vital organs of the body including the heart and the lungs. **To the ancient mind the abdomen symbolized the feelings, affections, will, desires, as well as our conscience.**

Ask yourself how many times you have felt these areas of your life under attack. Every believer needs protection in this area. We MUST put the breastplate on DAILY. We cannot survive on yesterday's victories. **The war has been won but the battle is still raging.**

Some of the greatest victories in world wars occurred not because the enemy was outnumbered in soldiers or weaponry. Rather the battles were won on downfalls of emotions, affections, wills and desires. Great leaders have fallen into this trap and have led their armies to defeat.

Saints who depend upon their feelings are doomed to fall away. Do not rely on yesterday's feelings. **Emotionalism is a weak foundation to build your faith on.** The same is true of experiences. Thank God for your experiences, but don't rely on them.

Those who forsake the breastplate of righteousness become discouraged and depressed. Their physical depression quickly moves to spiritual depression. Doubt comes in like a flood. I've heard many people tell me that they questioned their salvation.

"What did Adam do when he found it a little hard to walk?"

"He had a little Cain."

Dr. Douglas Mantz
"Let There be Laughter"
p. 56

"How did God stop Adam from gambling?"

"He took away his paradise"

ibid p. 56

III. WHEN DOES IT PROTECT?

We must first of all be convinced of its need and then take advantage of its use in our lives. It is of no use if we are simply convinced that we need it, if we never "put it on."

It also has to be put on properly. There is no protection for our backs. **No Christian can find protection in defeat, when they are running from their problems.** We must face them head on and stand strong.

It will not protect us if we try to use an **imitation.** **God never provides us with a generic brand of righteousness.** It is NOT a "one kind fits all." **HIS righteousness is suited for our areas of weakness.** We cannot put Saul's armour on when facing our giants.

*"I cannot go in these," he (David) said to Saul,
"because I am not used to them."*

I Samuel 17:39b

IV. HOW DOES IT PROTECT?

This breastplate of righteousness protects when we understand what it is and how it works. Paul said that it was a breastplate of righteousness. Some translations (NEB) have incorrectly translated the word to ***"integrity."*** The problem is that integrity is something we develop and cannot be transferred.

If anyone is relying upon their inherent goodness to withstand the attacks of the devil they are setting themselves up for a great fall. The great saints seem to become less confident upon their own integrity as they grew in their relationship with Christ. If you study the lives of George Whitefield, John & Charles Wesley, Hudson Taylor etc., you could begin to question your Christianity.

Paul was a Pharisee so he understood how to live a pious life. Yet he considered all of it "dung, useless, loss" (Philippians 3:8) when compared with the excellency of His Saviour. We must understand that our duty is to put on the righteousness of Christ which is by faith and kept on by obedience.

The patriarch Abraham was given this breastplate and he put it on because he understood its value.

*"Abraham believed God, and it was credited
(counted - KJV) to him as righteousness."*

Romans 4:3

IV. HOW DOES IT PROTECT? (Contd.)

There are two words which have been used in Scripture which we must understand to gain this protection.

A. Imputed Righteousness - This is another way of saying we are justified by our faith. It is the foundation of our standing in God. Paul spoke about it in Philippians 3. He did not base his confidence on his circumcision, tribal background, religious sect, past works or character strengths. He rather wanted to gain Christ,

"and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."

Philippians 3:9

Paul understood the mystery of the imputed righteousness of God. Imputation means *"that you take something that belongs to one person and you put it into the account of another."*

If one man owes a debt; you can take it out of the page of a ledger and put it on the page of someone else in the same ledger. The first person no longer owes a debt he could not pay. The other one pays a debt he did not owe. Not only does God take our debt upon Himself, He also offers us His righteousness if we simply accept it by faith. So when God looks down from heaven he doesn't see me but rather the righteousness of His dear Son covering me.

"I am covered over with the robe of righteousness that Jesus gives to me. I am covered over with the precious blood of Jesus and He lives in me. What a joy it is to know my heavenly Father loves me so and gives to me my Jesus. When He looks at me He see's not what He used to see, but He sees Jesus."

"God made him who had not sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

II Corinthians 5:21

Salvation by imputed righteousness means that Christ's perfect righteousness is put into my account, imputed to me, put on me by God.

IV. HOW DOES IT PROTECT? (Contd.)

B. Imparted Righteousness

The Puritans used to emphasize that a person not only needed the **imputing of righteousness** but also the **impartation of righteousness**. It is not enough to simply have a robe of righteousness placed upon us. **That righteousness must dwell within us.**

When we are imparted with righteousness, Our Lord's righteousness becomes part of us. It is now residing in our being. It is not only imputed to us as a cloak or a covering but also it is infused into us. **It is comparable to a blood transfusion where the blood from one person is put into the circulation and blood of another. It is then imparted, infused, injected into another.**

This impartation is working in us in order to bring us to perfection on the Day of our Lord's return. We will then be able to be presented to Christ as His bride, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27).

John the Baptist used this word to describe what a man should do with someone who has nothing.

"The man with two tunics should share (impart - KJV) with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

Luke 3:11

The impartation of Christ's righteousness will bring us to a place of confidence in spiritual warfare. We all need this breastplate of righteousness to overcome the evil one.

Have you forsaken your former life and allowed God to fill you with His righteousness? It must be done through an act of faith and obedience. It is a daily practise. I'm not saying you'll loose your salvation by not doing it, but you will be often discouraged by failure without daily receiving His righteousness.

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Date: Feb 19/17

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Build Your Church - F

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II. WHAT DOES IT PROTECT?

III. WHEN DOES IT PROTECT? - *I Samuel 17:39b*

IV. HOW DOES IT PROTECT? - *Philippians 3:8; Romans 4:3*

A. Imputed Righteousness - *Philippians 3:9; II Corinthians 5:21*

B. Imparted Righteousness - *Ephesians 5:27; Luke 3:11*