

Sunday School

The Whole Armor of God

Ephesians 6:14(b)

Lesson 2 – “The Breastplate of Righteousness”

Jan. 23 & Jan. 30, 2022

Anchor Scripture: Ephesians 6:14(b) and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

No Roman soldier will go into battle without his breastplate. That would be like a policeman going to the streets without his bulletproof vest. The breastplate to the soldier was what the vest is to an officer. It provided a layer of comfort and confidence for the soldier to engage in battle.

It was made out of the toughest material. It also had the very best metal sown into the breastplate and was often doubled in thickness. There were some breastplates that were intentionally doubled even more at the heart and in the abdomen area. Those who had this reinforcement were oftentimes leaders of the Army, or they were the best soldiers in the unit.

The breastplate was often designed to fit the soldier’s body. It was made for him. It was a covering that was:

- *Personalized for him.*
- *Protective for him.*

Paul identifies this breastplate as righteousness!

He is saying that a Christian must be fitted with righteousness.

There are several versions or applications of righteousness, and this concept is a good way of discussing the Bible’s view of righteousness.

I. The Bible's View of Self-Righteousness

A. Paul's assessment of some Jews

- ***Romans 10:1-4*** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. ² For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This is the righteousness that thinks and puts so much emphasis on self and entitlement.

There were those who thought they were morally, spiritually, and socially better than others.

The Pharisees:

- ***Luke 16:15*** ¹⁵ And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

B. The principle in the parable

- ***Luke 18:9-14*** ⁹ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
- ***Matt. 23:25-28*** ²⁵ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. ²⁶ Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. ²⁷ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

C. Paul is not thinking of the breastplate of self-righteousness.

II. Providential Righteousness

This is the righteousness that we get from God by becoming saved.

- *Philippians 3:9 (NIV)* ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in^a Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

This is God making us righteous because of His power, His grace, and His righteousness that is imputed in us. We have nothing to do with it.

It is the righteousness that we attain that is the result of our:

- *Cleansing.*
- *Conversion.*

What Paul is not referring to is his own providential righteousness!

III. Practical Righteousness

Practical righteousness is that where do we submit to live out our faith as a result of:

- *Our choice.*
- *Our willingness.*

Practical righteousness is a life lived with an aim to be obedient to God by choice, by desire, and by a willingness to God's way.

It's putting on practical righteousness that is in line with the inner self.

- *Romans 4:22-24 (NIV)* ²² This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³ The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

IV. This breastplate of righteousness helps to guard:

A. Our witness

Satan can so easily infiltrate our will and our witness that can lead us to stray away.

- *Paul's comments regarding Demas*

➤ **2 Tim. 4:10** ¹⁰For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Demas was obviously walking in a personal willingness of righteousness, but something happened.

That personal breastplate of righteousness helps us to stay in the race.

B. Our worship

A pandemic or problems or predicaments can cause you to lose your will and desire to gather to worship.

Apostasy (a falling away from) was not something that just happened in biblical days; it is quite prevalent and happens even today.

➤ **Hebrews 3:12-14** ¹²Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

C. In order to stay in faith, you must ensure that you keep the breastplate of righteousness on.

- *It protects your heart for God and the things of God.*
- *It guards your vital spiritual organs.*
- *It helps you to keep your personal wants, willingness, and intentions to stay in line with the inners.*