

We are studying pieces of “the whole armor of God.”

The “armor of God” is a necessary tool in our fight against our common enemy, the devil.

Without every piece of the armor in place, we are easy prey for the enemy.

When the pieces of the armor are missing, Satan has little trouble defeating us.

He has little trouble damaging our testimonies, infiltrating our churches, and devastating our church. When the armor is missing, we are easily defeated.

Yet, when a saint of God is dressed in “the whole armor of God,” the enemy has a hard time dealing with them.

When the armor is in place, he cannot penetrate their defenses, and he must watch helplessly as they “stand” for God’s glory day after victorious day.

I want that to be my testimony, how about you?

Let’s continue to examine the pieces of “the whole armor of God.”

Knowing what they are and how to use them will help us to “stand” for the Lord in victory

The first piece of armor is mentioned in verse 14a.

It is “the belt of truth.”

This refers to a life of total commitment to the Lord.

It refers to a life that is built upon faithfulness to the Word of God and to the God of the Word.

It speaks of truth in testimony and truth in living.

This “belt of truth” will provide the Christian soldier stability, and it also provides a place for the other pieces of the armor to rest.

Without the “belt of truth” the soldier of God will find the other pieces of the armor useless.

As we continue to think about the matter of Spirit-Filled Warfare, let’s move further in our study of “the whole armor of God.”

We are doing that by considering all the pieces of that armor.

We have talked about The Belt Of Truth.

Today, let's consider The Breastplate Of Righteousness.

To Know Him and Make Him Known

1) The Breastplate Of Righteousness—Vs. 14

- a) The “breastplate” was a sleeveless piece of armor that covered the full torso of the soldier.
- b) No Roman soldier would dare go into without the “breastplate” in place.
- c) There were several ways to make “breastplates” in that day.
- d) Some were made of heavy pieces of leather.
- e) This leather was shaped to fit the upper body.
- f) The “breastplate” was then covered with overlapping slices of animal hooves, horns, or pieces of metal.
- g) Some were made of very thin pieces of linen cloth.
- h) This kind of “breastplate” was also covered with strips of hooves, horns, or metal.
- i) The third kind, and the kind I would have preferred since I am allergic to pain, was made of large pieces of metal that were hammered to fit the body.
- j) Regardless of the kind of “breastplate” the soldier wore, the intent was the same.
- k) The “breastplate” was designed to the vital organs that are housed in the torso.
- l) The “breastplate” protected the heart, the lungs, the liver, the stomach, etc.
- m) In an age before antibiotics, and advanced surgery techniques, a wound in that part of the body would not only be very painful, but it would also have likely been fatal too.
- n) So, the soldier depended on the “breastplate” to protect him from injury and death.
- o) The spiritual significance of this piece of armor becomes clear when you stop to remember that the ancient world believed that the “heart” represented “the will and the mind” of a person.
- p) They also believed that the “bowels,” of what we would call the “internal organs,” the “guts”, represented “the seat of emotion or feelings.”
- q) Several verses in the New Testament bear this out.
- r) **Phil. 1:8—“ For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus**
 - i) That word affection means bowels, like down in the depths of your body
- s) **Phil. 2:1—“ Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,**
- t) **Col. 3:12—“ So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**
 - u) Also, Philemon 7, 12, 20; 1 John 3:17.
 - v) We still use the same terminology regarding the “heart.”
 - w) We say things like “I love you with all my heart.”
 - x) Or, “I feel it in my heart.”
 - y) What we actually mean is that we “have a feeling about something.”
 - z) So, we understand the terminology.

- aa) The reason I mention all this is that just as the “breastplate” of the ancient Roman soldier would protect his “heart” and “bowels,” the “breastplate” Paul mentions here is designed to do the very same thing for the child of God.
- bb) The two areas of life where Satan most frequently attacks the people of God are in the “mind and emotions.”
- cc) Satan will fill our mind with false doctrines and false emotions.
- dd) Satan will use the wicked world around us to tempt us to think wrong thoughts and to follow wrong emotions.
- ee) Satan will use confusion to warp our thinking and feelings to cause to love the wrong things, follow the wrong priorities, have the wrong goals in life, dedicate ourselves to the wrong loyalties, and to over commit ourselves to the wrong things.
- ff) Satan wants to strip the truth from our minds, while filling it with his own perverted ideas.
- gg) Satan wants to stop us from living holy, pure lives, so he will lure us toward envy, hatred, greed, jealousy, immorality, and every other human vice.
- hh) Satan wants us to make light of our sins.
- ii) He doesn’t want us to confess it and deal with it God’s way.
- jj) He wants us to get desensitized to it, so that we come to look at wickedness as a way of life for us.
- kk) He wants us to rationalize our sin, and not seek the Lord for forgiveness.
- ll) To accomplish these and other goals, Satan attacks us in the way we think and the way we feel.
- mm) If he can cause us to think about things the wrong way and follow feelings that are not pleasing to the Lord, he can defeat us and drag us away from the Lord.
- nn) He can get us out of the fight, all by changing how we think and feel.
- oo) The “breastplate of righteousness” offers protection against these attacks of the devil.
- pp) When this piece of armor is in place, Satan will be unable to attack us in those realms.
- qq) This “breastplate” sounds very important to me.
- rr) So, let’s find out what it is.
- ss) But, before I tell you what it is, let me tell you what it isn’t.

2) Practical Righteousness—vs. 14

a) It Isn’t Self-Righteousness –

- i) Self-righteousness is not true righteousness at all.
- ii) It is the worst form of sin imaginable.
- iii) The self-righteous person believes their character and legalistic behavior earns them favor with the Lord.
- iv) They believe it is up to them to please the Lord and to earn Him reward, so they cloth themselves in a cloak of self-righteousness.
- v) The self-righteousness person comes to believe that they are better than others because they possess standards for living that appear to be higher than those who live around them.
- vi) The self-righteous person lives not to please the Lord, but to meet a standard of righteous they have created in their own minds.
- vii) They believe that if they can stop enough sin; if they can avoid enough evil; or if they can do enough good, God will be pleased with them and reward them accordingly.

- viii) What they fail to realize is their self-righteousness provides the enemy with a powerful weapon he can use to strangle the life out of their service for the Lord.
- ix) They lose their joy in the Lord.
- x) They have no real peace, because they can never do or be enough.
- xi) They become judgmental because others are always failing to live up to their standards.
- xii) They wreck churches because they are slaves to a law of their own making, and because they know nothing of love, forgiveness, and grace.
- xiii) The self-righteous person cannot grasp the truth that their righteousness is nothing more than “filthy rags,” Isa. 64:4.
- xiv) They can’t understand that their self-righteous activity closes the door to God’s blessings if they are saved, and to His salvation if they are lost, Matt. 5:20.

b) It Isn’t The Imputed Righteousness Of Christ –

- i) When we trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior, His righteousness was “imputed” to us, Rom. 4:6; 11; 22-24.
- ii) **2 Cor. 5:21—“ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**
- iii) It is impossible for us to “put on” that kind of righteousness, because it has already been given to us in its fullness and it is ours forever.
- iv) This “imputed righteousness” is the very foundation of the Christian life.
- v) This righteousness allows us access to God. It opens the door of Heaven to us.
- vi) It protects us against the eternal fires of Hell. But, it does not protect us from the attacks of the enemy.
- vii) On the contrary, since the devil knows that he can’t have us because we belong to Christ, he redoubles his efforts to defeat us in an attempt to discredit the Savior, the church, and the God of glory.

c) It Is Practical Righteousness –

- i) The “breastplate of righteousness” Paul speaks about here is the practical righteousness of a life lived in simple obedience to the Word of God.
- ii) The child of God is to walk in obedience to God’s Word everyday.
- iii) This is in line with the new identity we received when we came to Jesus,
- iv) **2 Cor. 5:17—“ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come**
- v) When we walk in the newness of our life in Jesus, Satan will lack an opportunity to attack us,
- vi) **Eph. 4:24-27—“ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity**
- vii) Thus, we are to robe ourselves in righteous works for the glory of God,
- viii) **Col. 3:9-14—“ Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in**

all. So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

ix) Paul showcases the difference between human self-righteousness and practical righteousness in

x) **Phil 3:4-12—" although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.**

xi) But Paul goes on to add this

xii) **Phil. 3:13-14—" Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**

xiii) He wants us to know that salvation is not based on what we have done, but on what we have been given in Jesus.

xiv) When the Lord saves us and brings us out of sin and dead religion into a new life in Jesus, the imputed righteousness of Christ within is lived out in practical righteousness, or obedience to the Lord.

- d) When we live in obedience to the Lord and His Word, He is glorified and Satan has a difficult time with a believer who understands who he is in Jesus Christ.
- e) On the other hand, a believer who takes sin lightly and plays around the edges of evil, will find that lacking the "breastplate of righteousness" will result in some devastating consequences.

3) Do Not Be Lacking—vs. 14

- a) **ILL-Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan, is a great illustration of this. The main character whose name is Christian is on his way to the Holy City and he meets Apollyon (Satan). Satan tells him all the ways he has been unfaithful to God and reminds him of his many sins. He accuses him of being unfaithful. But Christians response is that it is all true and that he has left out much more but that the one whom he serves is merciful and ready to forgive**
- b) **Lacking the "breastplate of righteousness" will rob you of your Spiritual Joy –**

- i) Most of the relationship and emotional problems we have in life are not the fault of other people, but are the direct result of unconfessed, un-forsaken sin in our own lives.
- ii) Many of the doubts, fears, and griefs we carry around with us are not related to what others do or don't do.
- iii) They are related to a failure in our own lives to live holy and clean before the Lord.
- iv) When Satan finds a chink in our armor in this area, he exploits it to its fullest, and when he does, our joy, peace and sense of spiritual wellbeing are the first casualties.
- v) When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, killed Uriah, and covered it up with a mountain of lies, he lost his joy in the process,
- vi) **Psa. 51:12—" Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit**
- vii) Nothing takes the place of holiness!
- c) **Lacking the "breastplate of righteousness" will rob you of your Spiritual Fruit –**
 - i) If you are disobedient to the Word of God, you will be unfruitful in your work for the Lord.
 - ii) Here is the recipe for fruitfulness:
 - iii) **John 15:5—" I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing**
 - iv) When we serve the Lord out of a disobedient spirit, any achievements we seem to have will be nothing but empty skins with no fruit within.
- d) **Lacking the "breastplate of righteousness" will rob you of your Spiritual Rewards –**
 - i) Without holiness and righteous obedience to the Word of God, nothing we do is pleasing to the Lord.
 - ii) Thus, nothing we do in His name will be blessed.
 - iii) Everything we do while not wearing "the breastplate of righteousness" will burn up on the day of judgment, 1 Cor. 3:11-15.
- e) **Lacking the "breastplate of righteousness" dishonors God and brings reproach upon His name and His glory –**
 - i) The worst part of our sin as believers is that our sins bring dishonor to the name of our Father in Heaven.
 - ii) Our sin hinders the spread of the Gospel.
 - iii) Our sin tells the world that we are no different than them.
 - iv) When we sin, we open the door for Satan to attack us and hinder our effectiveness for the Lord.
 - v) That is why we must "take up" and "put on" "the breastplate of righteousness."
 - vi) When we do, our thought life and our emotional life are protected from the attacks of the enemy.
 - vii) Consider the following verses:
 - viii) **2 Cor. 10:5—" We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,**
 - ix) **Phil. 4:6-9—" Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is**

honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you

Conc: When we have on “the breastplate of righteousness” we will live lives that are clean, pure, and that bring glory to the Lord.

When we live out practical righteousness day by day, the enemy will find that his temptations will hold have no power over us.

The “belt of truth” and “the breastplate of righteousness” are essential pieces of “the whole armor of God.”

When they are in place, we are on our way to becoming a believer who is “able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.”

Here the word of Paul:

Rom. 13:11–14—“ Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts

- Are you wearing “the breastplate of righteousness?”
- Are you living a clean, holy life for the glory of God?
- If there are sins to confess, bring them to God now, and He will forgive them, 1 John 1:9.
- If you have been kicked around by the devil, do what you have to do to get clean, so the Lord can use your life for His glory.
- If you are lost, come to Him now for salvation. He will not turn you away, John 6:37.