

**Ephesians 6:14**  
**Breastplate of Righteousness:**  
**Protecting Your Heart While Displaying Your Righteousness**

This morning we are going to take a look at a couple of the spiritual pieces of armor we are given. The first is the belt of truth which we will briefly look at.

**Ephesians 6:14, “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”**

Belts are pretty important aren't they? Things could get quite embarrassing if you had on loose pants but not a good fitting belt. Belts keep things where they ought to be. The same is true of the belt of truth.

When Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus, he was in Rome under house arrest. While he had a lot of freedom, he always had a roman guard near him, keeping tabs on him.

I have no doubt watching this guard and the way he was dressed influenced Paul in his writing about the spiritual armor of God. When it came to the belt of truth he saw the importance of the belt.

After putting on the piece of armor called the breastplate, **PIC 1** which most likely was a two part piece of armor similar to what you see here, covering one's back as well as one's front.

As Paul was observing this armor he noticed how this piece of armor was connected to the large belt which the roman soldier had around his waist. **PIC 2** The belt held everything tightly in place to give maximum protection to the soldier.

That is what truth does doesn't it?

1. **Truth** protects us from Satan's lies

That is what we spent time looking at last week when we spoke about the helmet of salvation. If we are not standing firm on the truth God reveals to us in His word then we are standing on shaky ground.

Truth is what holds all things together isn't it?

**Back to PIC 2** The Roman soldier's belt also had straps of leather or metal connected to it that would hang down and protect the soldier's loins.

I like the way some have drawn the belt of truth. This is one I designed for us this morning. **PIC 3** The belt of truth has a number of truths hanging from it that as we hold onto, we are made strong and we are once again protected from Satan's lies.

Truths like salvation which we touched upon last week. And the fact that we are made holy, we are redeemed and we are justified. All biblical terms and truths that if we understand and hold onto we are protected from the lies Satan, the world and others may have us try and believe.

The belt of truth is so important in that it holds all other pieces of armor together. As we move onto the breastplate of righteousness, we are going to see the many gifts we have been given. The gift not only of salvation that we saw last week but the gift of holiness, justification and redemption.

In verse 13 we read, **Ephesians 4:13a**, "Therefore, take up the armor of God..."

We must always remember that it is not our armor but it is God's armor that He has made available to us. It was made available to us when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior.

## 2. In Christ, we have received the breastplate of righteousness

Look at some scriptural truths.

**1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His (God’s) doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption...”**

**2 Corinthians 5:21, “He made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

**Romans 5:17-19, “For if by the transgression of the one (Adam), death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men (people), even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all. For as through the one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”**

**1 Peter 2:24, “who His (Jesus’) own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed.” KJV**

The breastplate of righteousness is a gift from the Father God to us. But it was a gift that had to be earned. Did you see through who and how the gift was earned?

**3. The gift of the breastplate of righteousness was earned by Christ, by the stripes He received and His death on the cross**

The gift to you of the breastplate of righteousness is no small thing. It cleansed you from all unrighteousness. Not only for yesterday but for today and tomorrow. Because of this gift...

**Romans 8:1, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

You have been justified, made right with God through the blood of Jesus. When judgement time comes for all the earth, you can look into Jesus' face and now He paid the penalty for your sins.

**1 John 4:17, “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgement; because as He is, so also are we in this world.”**

This is a huge statement, a huge truth. As God is, so also are we in this world. I know it is too good to be true but that is what God says in His Word.

**4. If you have accepted Christ in your life then you are, inwardly, in your spirit, you are just as pure as God Himself is**

But as you know, even though we have been made right with God, even though we have, in Christ, been given the breastplate of righteousness, our exterior lives, our behavior, our speech, our thoughts need some help.

This again is where the breastplate of righteousness comes in. Let's go back to chapter 6 of Ephesians.

**Ephesians 6:10-11, 14, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”**

The truth is you have received the breastplate of righteousness through you accepted Christ. Inwardly it is a done deal but God would have us put on the breastplate of righteousness so that we can stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

So what does it mean to put on the breastplate of righteousness?

This is what David said. **Psalm 40:10, “I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart...”**

Yes, we have received the righteousness of God but it doesn't stop there.

**PIC 4** ...The breastplate of armor a soldier would wear could be something as simple as leather. Not very ornate. But the breastplate of a tribune, one of the highest ranked military leaders in the Roman empire, was probably very similar to what you see here. It was very ornate and worn with pride and a sense of responsibility.

We are the sons and daughters of the most high God. We are given the highest position under God and Jesus and the breastplate we are given to wear, everything else pales in comparison.

**5. The breastplate of righteousness, we wear with pride but also with a sense of responsibility.**

**Wearing the breastplate of righteousness has many benefits.**

**a. You are testifying that you are a follower of Jesus.**

Look at what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:16, “Let your light (your righteousness) shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”**

Even though living a life of righteousness may not always be popular with the main stream of society, even though you may be pulled in different directions by your flesh or by Satan, a follower of Christ proudly wears the breastplate of righteousness. It leads you into a place where people know who you are and when they are struggling, who do you think they turn to? You and then to Jesus.

Michal worked as a special ed teachers aide for three years. She worked with a team of young women, most of whom were caught up in the ways of the world. Their speech, the things they shared about what they were watching on television, how they dealt with their co-workers, the life they lived after hours. All spoke about where they were in their lives.

Michal stood quietly aside as those conversations took place and as the Lord would lead her, she would share biblical truths with them. Sometimes it was heard other times it was rejected. But when things would get difficult in these young woman's life, who do you think they came to? Even her boss, who was a very angry, bitter woman who made life difficult for her employees, turned to Michal. Even after Michal and I moved, her boss still contacted her.

Wearing the breastplate of righteousness in your speech, in your thoughts, in your behavior has a more profound effect than most people know.

**1 Peter 2:12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles (non-believers) so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may, because your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."**

At times, those people around you, your co-workers or even your family, may call you goody two-shoes, or they may see your imperfections and call you a hypocrite, but in the end, because you strived to wear your breastplate of righteousness as much as possible, they will glorify God.

**b. Wearing the breastplate of righteousness protects your heart from the lies of Satan**

Satan is out to kill, steal and destroy anything that speaks of God, anyone who is trying to live for God. He knows the impact one person who is living righteously can have so he attacks them in every way he can.

By following God and His ways we can be protected from Satan's attacks. He is the accuser of the brethren but if we are following God then he has nothing to accuse us of.

Most of the people I know, myself included, when Satan attacks it is when they have fallen in some way. He will come in and use whatever that slip up was to beat us down and tell us we are not good enough. He point out our failures and tells us if we have received righteousness we wouldn't be doing what we are doing.

Most, not all of the attacks of Satan I have experienced truly are justified. I have allowed him, given him some ammunition to work with. And I can tell you from personal experience, if you set aside the breastplate of righteousness and do your own thing. Follow whatever your fleshly impulses desire, follow whatever the world is putting out in front of you, you have set yourself up for the attacks of Satan. And if you live there, you will be so beat up that you wont be effective for God's kingdom.

That is what happens when we set aside the breastplate of righteousness.

I wont read it but I have put in the bulletin some of the negative results of not keeping your breastplate of righteousness firmly in place.

Negative results of not keeping your breastplate of righteousness firmly in place:

- \* Creates a hard heart.
- \* Makes one weak and ineffective against other sins.
- \* Hinders the ability to experience significant spiritual victory in their life.
- \* Subtly affects all their relationships in a negative way.
- \* Pulls them away from closeness with God.
- \* Increases vulnerability to committing sin in their daily life.

- \* Increases the likelihood of experiencing negative emotions.
- \* Results in the peace of God feeling out of their reach.
- \* Results in spiritual deception- it is harder for them to recognize truth.
- \* *And* for many, it results in becoming prodigal Christians.
- \* It also often weakens the physical body and makes them more vulnerable to sickness and disease.

But on the flipside, when we are living our lives with the breastplate of righteousness firmly in place...

**c. You become a powerhouse for the Lord to work in and through**

Paul said we get to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. We can resist, stand firm.

This is where we want to be amen? This is where I want to be, this is where I want all of you to be and where God wants this church to be.

A powerhouse for the Lord to work in and through.

**PIC 4**

The breastplate of righteousness is a gift. It was earned by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. It was given to us as a gift of our salvation. It protects us as it guides us in our daily lives. It witnesses to the world of the goodness of God.

Put it on, keep it on and the life you will live will be blessed on levels you never thought possible. Put it on, wear it proudly because it is yours, it is Christ's, it is God's. It is worthy of you displaying wearing it, living in it proudly.

Let's pray