
Ephesians 6:14
Breastplate of Righteousness Part 2
The Blessed Life of Righteousness

Let's begin by reading our passage in Ephesians 6.

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...”

Last week we talked about how it came about that the breastplate of righteousness was made available to us.

We examined the privilege of being given the breastplate of righteousness. We are given this wonderful gift not because of any goodness we have but because of the goodness of our God and because of the suffering and life Jesus gave at the cross. He took upon Himself our sins so we could be made the righteousness of God. For the future life we have been promised in heaven and also for the life we live today.

Because of this we can wear the breastplate of righteousness with pride, honor and with a sense of responsibility.

This morning I did want to speak about what our part was in receiving this wonderful gift and what our part is in keeping this gift, this protection in place.

In order to do this we must go back and examine our how we came about being in a position to receive the breastplate of righteousness in the first place.

When salvation comes to a person it can come in a number of different ways. Most times it is because they are led by God to a place where they realize the direction they are going is not the right direction. They sense, by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, there is a better life for them and they begin to believe it is through Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life.

Look with me what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit in the gospel of John.

John 16:8, “And He (the Holy Spirit), when He comes, (He) will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...”

When the Holy Spirit comes upon a person, what is one of the first things that occurs? Conviction. Conviction of what?

1. The Holy Spirit brings conviction

Two weeks ago I shared a sermon about the importance of keeping the helmet of salvation on to protect our thoughts.

When it comes to salvation though, the church of the today has used this approach. If you want to get out of hell and go to heaven, pray this prayer. Ask Jesus into your heart and you will be saved.

While this is true what is missing here? Repentance. If the Holy Spirit comes upon a person they will be convicted of their life of sin, life of sin being anything that is not of following God, Jesus and their ways of righteousness.

When the church puts forward the simple message of asking Jesus into a person’s heart and that they will not have to go to hell but get to go to heaven, while this message is mostly true it is missing one important component. Repentance.

I shared my testimony a few weeks ago. I shared that years ago I went through a brief stint with drugs. I was wonderfully and gloriously saved and I praise God for this. But in my case I did not go to rehab. My rehab was with God and in His Word until I came to know Jesus in a healing and powerful way.

In rehab facilities, why do you think most people are there? Maybe you don't know this but in most rehab facilities, they are filled with people who have not chosen to be there although there are some of these individuals. But most of the people who are in rehab it is because they have been court ordered to go and when they do go they will get their sentences reduced.

Now, do you think the individuals who have been caught doing something drug-related and are asked if they want to go to rehab to have their penalty reduced, do you think those individuals really experience true rehabilitation? Do you think their life will be changed so when they get out they are different people.

Most times not. Making a decision to reduce your penalty without an inner conviction of the wrong you are doing usually has limited success. There is not true inner repentance.

The same thing can happen when people are looking to get into heaven and out of hell but they have not been convicted by the Holy Spirit. They are looking to avoid the penalty of hell but not looking to change their life in the here and now by following Jesus.

Now God may use this path to save a person, convicting them of the horrors of hell. But generally true salvation comes when a person comes under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, becomes convicted of their sin, of the right way to live and not to live.

2 Corinthians 7:10, “For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

2. There are two types of sorrow. Sorrow of the world, of getting caught. And Godly sorrow which produces repentance

There is a sorrow that happens with certain individuals. Sorrow of getting caught, sorrow of penalty that is going to be enforced, a sorrow of the world. This is not a life giving type of sorrow.

Then there is a sorrow according to the will of God that produces repentance which leads to salvation.

3. Repentance is a big deal to God and to the person who is accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior

Let’s look at a few passages starting with the words of Jesus.

Some of this is going to be familiar to those who are attending Sunday School because repentance is what we have been studying over the last couple of weeks.

Mark 1:14-15, “...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.”

Luke 24:46-48, “⁴⁶ and He (Jesus) said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations.”

Paul, talking about the message he shared said this in Acts 20:21, “(I was) solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Time and time again we hear the message of the Gospel is to repent, repent of the selfish life you were living and turn towards the Lord, accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior and you will be saved.

Again I say, repentance is a big deal to God and an important part of salvation.

Let me go back to the passage of the Holy Spirit to define repentance again.

John 16:8, “And He (the Holy Spirit), when He comes, (He) will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...”

4. Three things that are identified that the Holy Spirit will bring conviction about: Sin, righteousness and judgment

Judgment we know and understand because we believe in hell. We believe that Satan, demons and all those who are not covered by the blood of Jesus are judged and their penalty is everlasting torment in hell. This should bring conviction to us, not only for ourselves but our families and everyone around us. The reality of judgment.

Then there is the conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit convicts a person who is living in the world and doing things the world does, they are convicted that the way they are living is not right. In fact it is wrong. It is a sin, it is an offense against God.

Then the Holy Spirit convicts of righteousness. This is a conviction that there is a right way to live and that is by following Jesus, His ways and His teachings.

A person who repents sees these things as God does, turns away from their old life and begins living a new life. A life that is now following Jesus.

This is the beginning of salvation but let me ask this question. Is repentance a one time deal? Is it only something we do once in our life at the beginning of our salvation and then we don't have to worry about it again? Or is repentance something that we must be involved in for all of our life?

Repentance is what leads us into salvation, into a saving relationship with the Creator of the Universe. And

5. Ongoing repentance is what keeps us humble and on the journey with Christ

We have a couple of pilots in the congregation. Delbert Forbes has piloted his own airplane for quite a few years. And Markoe Hanson up in the sound booth was a fighter pilot.

I always thought I wanted to be a pilot until I flew down to Haiti from Kansas in a small six seater airplane. **2 PICs in the same frame** I sat in a seat behind the pilots and as I watched them working the airplane, watching the fuel making all the necessary adjustments to assure we would arrive at our destination safely I saw just how much work was really involved. You don't think about that when you're a passenger on a large jet.

The pilots who flew us down to Haiti were good pilots but they had a piece of very important electronic equipment that made their job a lot easier. What do you think this was? An auto-pilot.

An auto-pilot is a great piece of technology because it allows you to set your destination into the computer and then the computer makes all the necessary adjustments to the airplane to keep you on course. Flaps move the airplane up and down and to the right or left. There is still a lot of things as a pilot you need to do and watch but the journey with an auto-pilot is much, much easier.

Flying in a plane there are several things happening. You may have strong winds at times that are pushing against the side, front or back of the airplane and if they are allowed to, they will push the plane way off course.

There is the speed of the airplane to consider, there is how high it is flying and oxygen levels at that altitude. There are multiple things happening when a person is flying that if they are not properly dealt with, those things will throw the airplane clear off course and not only will you struggle getting to your destination it can become very dangerous.

The same is true in our Christian life. There are forces at work in the world, forces which are working to keep you from moving ahead in your Christian walk and if these forces are not dealt with in a proper way, you might get to your destination, heaven, but the path may be littered with more pain and suffering than one needs to go through. There may be loss of opportunities, loss blessings, loss of growth in Christ and many other losses.

Wouldn't it be nice if we had an auto-pilot in our life that would automatically make the necessary changes when we get off of course in our Christian walk.

We are given a pilot as Christians but this pilot doesn't automatically make the change in direction for us, it just tells us what adjustments need to be made and then hopes we will make them.

I am of course talking about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to us at the point of our salvation and as we listen to it then it will keep us on course, out of bad weather and dangerous conditions and will bring us home to our destination safely.

Part of what the Holy Spirit brings into our lives in conviction. Conviction of sin and conviction of righteousness.

6. As we listen to the Holy Spirit pilot in our lives and make the necessary adjustments, we are protected, equipped and empowered

to not only reach our destination, but the journey will be fantastic, the views will be phenomenal, and the riches of God's blessings will be more than we can ever imagine.

That is God's promise for us when we follow His lead. He doesn't say there won't be some turbulence along the way. There even might be some big air pockets where we drop a down a bit. But He does promise the journey will be spectacular. The views from up high with Him will be incredible and the landing will be a glide into glory.

I believe

7. Wearing the breastplate of righteousness means living in a constant state of awareness of God's Holy Spirit directing our lives and repenting of the things we know are not in line with His direction.

The question for all of us this morning, are we living in a constant state of repentance? Are we seeking to keep our breastplate of righteousness in place. Are we listening to our Holy Spirit pilot and making the proper adjustments in the course of our flight.

That is the challenge of our Christian journey isn't it?

This morning I wanted us to end a little differently. I asked Mariam to play an invitation hymn. Have thine own way.

This hymn was written in 1902 by Adelaide Pollard, a woman who was hoping to go to Africa as a missionary but found herself unable to raise the needed funds to make the journey.

Greatly discouraged, she attended a prayer service one evening and as she sat there, she overheard an elderly woman say "It really doesn't matter what you do with us, Lord, just have your own way with our lives."

The elderly woman inspired Pollard and she contemplated the story of the potter from Jeremiah 18:3 and, upon her return home that evening, wrote all four stanzas before retiring for the night.

This hymn speaks of a heart who is surrendered to God.

Let's remain seated as we sing all four verses, taking the words to heart as a prayer for our lives.