

Girded with Truth, Guarded by Righteousness

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Going to have to have a sip of water.

All right. Well, tonight we're going to begin on a deep study of one of scriptures most powerful and practical sections, and it's the armor of God. In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul delivers a critical reminder that the Christian life is fundamentally a spiritual war, not a casual stroll. And just like a war, things are changing all the time. And the enemy wants to catch you off guard like a soldier being attacked when not prepared. That's where he's looking for an opening. And when you have an opening, it exposes us to be vulnerable. And when changes happen, we become vulnerable, don't we? Because we prepared all the way to that point and then the change happens. Now we're going to prepare again.

And so it is in these moments that we most need the steady protection of God's truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, and his word. The components of the armor of God. And our struggle is not against human adversaries. We see this. We're going to see this in the text which is flesh and blood which is the physical realm but against the unseen forces which is darkness a spiritual realm and it's against the principalities powers and rulers of darkness of this world. And so as soldiers we are on a spiritual battlefield. And yet God has not left us defenseless.

He has provided us with his own armor, the armor of God. And he crafted it. He crafted it perfectly personally by himself. And he perfectly fitted it for us. And he made it more than sufficient for every attack of the enemy. And going through the armor daily is a vital part of our daily walk with the Lord because change is inevitable. It is. And God promises albeit that he never changes. His words never change. And so God's armor in many ways makes us steady when life shifts. When life shifts.

So over the next few weeks, we will walk piece by piece through this armor, learning not only what it is, but how to put it on and stand firm in a day-to-day battles. So tonight, we begin with the first two pieces, the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. The belt of truth is foundational, just as a soldier's belt holds everything together, all the other pieces. So truth holds the Christian life together. Without truth, everything else falls apart. But with truth, God's truth revealed in his word, we are able to stand secure and ready for the spiritual fight.

And alongside this belt of truth, Paul points us the breastplate of righteousness. Just as a breastplate protects the soldier's vital heart and all of its vital organs, so righteousness guards our spiritual life. This is not our own righteousness which is as filthy rags as apostle Paul puts it

somewhere else, but rather it's the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us and we live it out through obedience. So truth secures us and righteousness protects us. Together they enable us to stand firm against the enemy's schemes which is can be revealed in trickery and lies and temptations.

So let's stand together not in our own strength but in the strength of the Lord as we fasten the bout of truth around our lives. Put on the breastplate of righteousness and prepare to walk through this series with hearts ready to be equipped by God himself. Before we open up into God's word tonight, I want to remind us that this subject of the armor of God is not a light one. In fact, one of the most enduring works ever written on this passage is William Gurnall's book titled The Christian in Complete Armor. Gurnall in this book. He's by the way a Puritan back in the 1600s writing this. It was a three set volume. It ran between 1,200 to over 1,300 pages. Okay, depending on the edition that you were reading from to unpack in just a few verses here in Ephesians 6. That alone tells us something, right?

This is not a shallow topic but a deep well of truth. Why such depth you might ask? Because Gurnall understood that the Christian life is a battlefield and without God's armor we are exposed. He wrote with urgency showing that every piece of the armor is vital for standing firm when life changes, when trials come, and when the enemy presses in. His work has stood the test for centuries, reminding believer that spiritual warfare is real and that God is part of everything we need to endure and overcome.

And so tonight, we walk through the armor of God. We are not skimming the surface as it were. We are stepping into a truth so profound that saints of old spent their lives plumbing its depths. And yet it's also true. So practical that it meets us right where we are in the changing seasons of our lives. Just to get some quotes from him, just some quotes. I want to illustrate the his profound mind and his profound depth of spiritual insight. I got three quotes for you from him.

First one, when afflicted, love can allow thee to groan but not to grumble. Think about that. Let me repeat that again. When afflicted, love can allow thee to groan but not to grumble. Groaning is okay. Another one. Above all sins, guard against bold or arrogant ones. You are not beyond the danger of such. If caught in the web of presumptuous sin, which is willful disobedience to God's word, not by mistake, call quickly to God for help. If you hesitate, you only give Satan time to entangle you more tightly. But if you cry out to God in true repentance, he will come at once to rescue you. The sooner you yield to the spirit, the less damage is done to your soul.

Last one. This one takes some thought. All of them do, but just Okay. Can Christ be in thy heart and thou not know it? Can one king be dethroned and another crowned in thy soul and thou hear no scuffle? Think about that. Enemy is right there.

So, let's dive in now. Ephesians chapter 6, and we're going to begin in verse 10 to lay out the context of where we're going to go this evening. Ephesians 6:10.

Paul saying, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto

you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Verse 14, stand therefore, having your loins gird about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."

May God bless the reading of his word. So we're going to be in verse 14 tonight mainly. So let's examine the two pieces of armor in detail. We will examine what we are commanded to put on Ephesians 6:11 and then what we must take up in Ephesians 6:13 and determine where we have fully complied or not. If any of these components are not properly secure, this is your opportunity to correct them.

So we see here it starts with stand therefore. Stand therefore this is a standing command. And why is it matter? Well, we see in Ephesians 6 this word stand repeatedly emphasized particularly in verses 11 and 13. And I tried to emphasize that when I was reading it. And the idea is this instruction is the importance of resolutely holding one's ground in your life. Refusing to be swayed by false teaching could come in in the forms of other gospels not based on scripture. That's just one of many. Another is fear which stops us from doing God's purpose and third temptation our sinful desires the all those things can put someone down and not in it for a standing according to God.

So if we are to consistently according to scripture to stand is to tie ourselves with the quality of steadfastness that's another way of saying that we reflect a deep trust in God's promises and his character because as God's children it is with God that people will ultimately have to deal with and as we reflect on that the times that we are to stand. I think as Christians we are being more pressed in to give in and there's a reason why Paul emphasized it so many times because they were trying to be pressed to not speak about Christ not do things in the name of Christ and it just gets more intensified as we get closer into the last days.

So I'm just as a pastor going, okay, I need to make sure we are prepared as a people if that time comes quicker than we think. And it's just wisdom to prepare ahead of time. Amen. So 1 Corinthians 16:13 urges, watch ye stand fast in the faith quit you like men be strong speaking particularly to men in the church and the responsibility of being a man and you know I just actually just said it right there but one of the key differences of a man from a child is the man taking on responsibility. It's not this idea I'm more macho than a child. It's not that idea. It's the idea how much are you willing to take responsibility and what are those responsibilities that the men are to take on that there are many things but I'm just going to name a few.

It's a commitment that you would show up, that you would be present when it opportunities to be courageous, opportunities to be dependable, opportunities to be faithful and in areas with work, with areas where you are to care for people that the Lord has entrusted to you. Those are the primary ones. But let me just share one more and it's accepting mistakes. It's important as men, we make mistakes and it's important to go, I need to learn from that. Let me hear from what this person has to say and listen, actually listen and pay attention because that might be an opportunity for growth. That might be opportunities to rekindle a relationship with someone that might have been some schisms before. And so these are just important things in order for us to stand and act like men and be strong.

So Ephesians 6:12 going back to our context reminds us that the battle is real and it is constant. And other passages on standing, we see in 1 Peter 5:9, we had just walked through that verse a couple of weeks ago. Tells us whom resist stand fast in the faith. Again, trust in God's promises and in his character. The enemy and James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." In other words, saying stand in him so that you may resist the devil and he will flee from you because retreating the enemy is not the answer. Amen.

Exodus 14:13-14 reminded Israel these words and Moses said unto the people, "Fear ye not stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show to you today. For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no more forever. Verse 14, the Lord shall fight for you and he shall hold your peace." So there it is, standing still and letting the salvation of the Lord take its place. Similarly, we are reminded as Christians as Christ's victory equips us to hold the line, to stand still. So 1 Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." So we can hold on to that promise. We have victory already. We just need to stand still for God to do his thing in his life in our lives.

Continuing on in this text in verse 14, so we saw stand and how it's emphasized in scripture. Let's now point and look at what it means to have your loins gird girded about with truth. Loins is your hips. The gird is the idea of buckling with truth. And what why is it pictured as a belt? Well, truth just like a belt is the idea that it won't stay in place. Truth will not be secure just like this belt that holds our hip in place. That's important first part of it. And then the second one is that truth frees us to move. So when a belt is tied up, we are free to move. Falsehood is the what entangles us, but truth helps us to freely move. It frees us up.

The Lord Jesus said this in John 8:32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Truth keeps weapons ready. We're going to see later in our study in verse 17 how God's word is illustrated as a sword. And so to effectively use a weapon, it must be handled with readiness. And if our belt is all over the place, we won't be able to move and handle that weapon with all honesty.

Second Timothy 2:15 puts it this way. And how we can ready ourselves is to study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. So studying is a big component of understanding the word of God more richly. And in Ephesians 4:22, you can turn there if you will, says this, that you put off concerning the former conversation of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust.

See, our walk in a world where Satan still remains the lowercase lord and the lowercase master and because our strength is found in aligning our lives with God's revealed truth and his word. See, Satan has his way of still using his words in the world, doesn't he? And he's masterful. He's been doing it for a long time to hold people entangled, but we are not to listen to his voice but we are to continue to hear the voice of the Lord. And many times he can use our old ways of conversing to bring in his words in our lives. Many times you might not know but it's him behind the words that the way you used to talk in your old life. And so that's something to be mindful of as we are in this part of the text.

Now truth must permeate in our entire beings guiding us with our thoughts and our speech and our actions and we must allow the truth to be to see it through God's lens and direct everything

that we say or do. This is what it means to have him lord in our lives. We're not dictating our own lives anymore. It's him. He's our master and he can do whatever he wants in our lives. And it's all good, isn't it? Amen.

And when you're and and when our affections are also impacted, we can we can live a firm and secure way in this truth. When our hearts are settled with it and we protect our own hearts from desiring anything of the world in this way and the truth reveals that the world is under the influence of the evil one and that everything found in the world does not originate with the father. 1 John 5:19 puts it this way. And we know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 1 John 2:15 love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.

So being girded with the truth is less about memorizing the entire Bible but more about using the truth as the standard as the standard of our lives. And so then the essential point is that we gauge everything we encounter in light of the truth of scripture. If something aligns with it with the truth, it is worthy. But if it stands against the truth, it must be rejected. That's how we are to look at things.

And Jesus calls us to understand God's word in this way in John 17:17. Thy word is truth. Everything God speaks is truth. And and we are to identify in him the in the Lord Jesus Christ as the way and the truth and so his it's not only the words that God speaks but it's the way God the Lord Jesus displayed that truth in his life and we are to be following in his example as well.

Other things that I want to share is when the belt of truth is secure, here are some perspective to look at. It shapes the way we look at the Bible that that when cultural trends shift and changes that we can trust that God is unwavering in his truth. Nothing that the culture does can ever change God's truth. Nothing. That's another way of looking at Romans 12:2 says to be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

So as a culture shifts we are to constantly renew our mind. So there's a change in the world and we are to continue to be transformed by God's word. So that's a good change. Amen. And so I want to remind you that the mission of God of place on Calvary Road will never change. I will make sure of that because I follow what the Lord Jesus says in Matthew 28 18-20 the great commission. Everything in there is for for us as a local body to make disciples to baptize and to teach whatsoever that the Lord Jesus has commanded, right? Because we know his promise is he will be with us all the way to the end of the the age. And so that remains the heartbeat of this pastor and the heartbeat as well as a church to call every believer to continue to walk with that mission.

But at times methods may look different. What do I mean by that? We see in scripture that this is not only acceptable but wise. Paul himself said in 1 Corinthians 9:22, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made of all things to all men that might by all means, there it is, save some." So he never compromised the message. He never compromised the gospel, but he adjusted his approach so that the truth could reach hearts in every circumstance. that just takes discernment. And it's godly discernment. And so while the mission is fixed and unchanging, it's rooted, it's staying, it's secure, the methods may shift.

So I gave that practical illustration from Paul. How does it look like realistically in our church and how we gather? There might be times in the week that we may gather in our homes that might come about at at times or how we share things. The church app, we recently introduced it. So we are now sharing communicating through the church app or how we serve. We may serve more in our local communities. And so that might be a change in our method. But you see all of that is still fixed on the mission. Amen. It's still fixed on the mission. And we are still able to make disciples, still baptized, still teach, and that's okay because the goal will always stay the same is to glorify Christ and bring people to him. Amen.

So let's rejoice that God gives us both a clear mission and the freedom to use spirit-led methods to fulfill it. Other things that we can look at what truth why it's so important to be secure in look down with me with Ephesians 5:8-11. Ephesians 5:8-11. I'm just going to read it to you and point out something here. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship of the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For is it shame even to speak of those things which are done in them in secret.

So what does truth does? It exposes lies with light. So that's very clear. Don't be ashamed of ever sharing the truth to expose lies. Amen. Another thing that we can look at, look at Ephesians 4:15. Ephesians 4:15. It says this, "But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ." Here we see that to build up the church, it's the idea that we must speak the truth in love. One person said truth without love is legalism. Love without truth is liberalism. And those are both extremes that we don't want to ever have our pendulum swing. We don't want to be legalistic and we don't want to be liberal. Amen. And so by doing it the word of God says truth with love, we will always stay in the middle right in the middle of scripture. Amen.

Truth around the way suggests readiness as I mentioned. We stay prepared also in daily reading of scripture, meditating on it, not just reading it but meditating in it on it and then most importantly practically is applying the scriptures. So I want to invite you to join me in a daily journey through God's word. So, beginning this January, you can read along with me using the Bible reading plan that I have been using in my own personal devotional. It will be made available starting in January on the church app. I already checked with Genesis. It's right there. It's there available. We just got to click and it will be on on January. And I would love for us to walk through it together.

Reading the scriptures daily not only strengthens our faith but unites us as a body. Growing side by side in the truth in God's word. Just imagine the joy of knowing that each day each day we are all feeding on the same passage and we're also praying over the same truths and we're also applying these truths into our lives shaped by the same spirit. So think on those things if you will join me and stay committed in daily Bible reading beginning in January. I find that that has helped me so much in my personal walk where I can look at the full counsel of God and I can see consistencies and themes and patterns and similar context in the old and the new. It I'm hoping that that would be also for you coming into 2026.

And you're going to see this a lot about me. I like to prepare ahead of time. And so I'm saying may 2026 be a year where we grow deeper in Christ together, where we go stronger in fellowship together and more steadfast in our witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. So importance beginning each day in the word before voices of the world set the agenda in your life. This is another thing why scripture reading is so important. I want God to set the agenda. Amen. And to fill our minds daily with his word. It counters lies before they ever take root in our hearts. So that's important.

Another thing is you will find that when you read scripture like like a daily pattern, you'll be able to memorize more scripture verses. Key verses will come and stick to you in your day-to-day life and you'll be able to quickly recall lies that the enemy puts on the forefront and pressing in attacking you. Matthew 4:4, we see the Lord Jesus Christ, he was able to quickly answer Satan, with it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeded out of the mouth of God. Psalm 119:11, thy word have I hid in my heart that I may not sin against thee. So daily reading, memorizing and meditating on deep words of truth makes us readily available when temptation whispers its lies.

And so in John 8:44, the Lord Jesus calls Satan a liar and the father of it. And the moment a lie surfaces, and it typically happens this way, no one will ever know or you deserve this. He always likes to say that no one will know, no one will see. Or he will say, "Look, you need a little bit of pride. You deserve this." And so he typically attacks in those ways. And you'll be able to catch those subtle lies that the enemy puts in your mind and you can rebuttal it with he's a liar and the father of it. He's a liar and a father of it. It counters allow with the verse. Amen. Only God's word can really be the right rebuttal.

And always speaking truthfully in your interactions will allow falsehood to not enter in into your life and compromise your spiritual foundation. Ephesians 4:25 says this, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are all members of one another." So, we're all in this together and we are to speak truth together and that's what keeps the enemy at bay because small compromises and integrity loosen the belt. Just think of like does a visual illustration is about one notch at a time, one notch at a time, one notch at a time and then it's all loose and it's over. That's how small compromise affects.

One person told me, "One unwise choice makes long-time permanent effects." And so, we got to think of it like that. It's those small incremental changes, the subtlety of Satan that unravels our lives to be a mess at the end. It's costly. It's disastrous. And we want to avoid his attacks as quickly as possible because Proverbs 12:19 says this, "The lips of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment." We think it's going to be oh, it's that's not going to last. No, it's it's I mean, it's going to be long. No, it's for a moment. It's like a vapor. It just it destroys like that.

So continuing on last part and this is where I will be wrapping up and we're going to be focusing now on having on the breastplate of righteousness. So why a breastplate in battle? A breastplate shields the heart and vital organs. Spiritually righteousness guards our inner life, the emotions, the will, the thoughts from the enemy's accusations and temptations.

So with the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, they empower us to resist every form of temptation whether it solves the mind or the affections with so the mind with lies, the affections of sinful desires. So Paul links this righteousness right rightly standing with God and and also right standing before people. He wants us to have a right standing with God and a right living before people. And so daily obedience keeps that armor fitted and tight and ready for battle.

1 John 3:7 is a reminder, little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous. Again, I it's kind of I'm kind of been beating this drum is because he is we are right. So because he is righteous, we are righteous. There's another pattern we're seeing. Here in this text Isaiah 59:17 pictures the Lord putting on righteousness as his breastplate. So even as the Lord Jesus he is putting on a breastplate showing signifying that we are him. We are part of him right we also carry on the same equipment that he will one day.

So 2 Corinthians 5:21 continuing with more for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we may be righteousness of God in him. In this part of the text, we see the most greatest exchange. The idea that where Christ's righteousness is imputed, meaning credit to believers, and then our sin is imputed to Christ, a debit, making all those who believe right with God. That's what's called the great exchange. That Christ imputed righteousness protects our heart. It's all of God or all originates from him.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 says this, "The breastplate of faith and love, showing that it also embodies holiness in our lives." This breastplate and it's a proper orientation of how we ought to live practically with brothers and sisters. And so out of the the heart, what what what is it? It says in Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence or care, for out of it are the issues of life." So breastplate also protects from what comes out, not just what comes in. And that's important because we don't want to just do everything that our hearts tells us to do, right? And so that's another reminder.

I have so much here to share but I'm going to just point out one one more part one more part and that is this that we rest in Christ finished work at the at the end of the day it's not our own marriage this armor of God is not something that makes you a Christian right it's not the idea Romans 3:22 even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. For all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So again, that righteousness is given to us by faith in Jesus Christ. And so we have to remind ourselves of that.

And another thing as we're resting in the finished work of Christ, I want to also remind us here is that we also need to rest in the sovereignty of God after our salvation. Psalm 127:2 puts it this way. It is vain for you to rise up early and to sit up late to eat the bread of sorrows, for so he giveth his beloved sleep. And let me just tell you, God wants us to have good rest. And if any of you feel like, oh, we're we're just doing so much work, we're just doing so much of this and that. One of the areas where you can test if you're in a stage of burnout, is how much sleep are you getting? And is that quality sleep?

And come to me if you ever feel like, you know what, pastor, I am just this is taking a lot of out in me. Maybe you need to take some maybe I need to take some rest. And I'll say, amen. Please go. Don't feel bad if you need a rest because of lack of sleep because that's where the enemy attacks as well because God says he wants his beloved to sleep. It's the idea of a well rest. And so please I'm sharing that because yes, we are going to do things for the Lord. Absolutely. And I would say that's part of development in our Christian walk. But then there's also recovery, time of recovery, time of rest. And I want us to both adapt that into our lives.

So at this time I want to conclude again knowing our confidence, our boldness where we rest in the Lord. May this encourage you and strengthen you to continue to fight the good fight the battle that God is wanting us to fight and it is worthy. Amen. It is a worthy thing to put on this armor that God has perfectly fit for all of us to put on. And may you be just be better aware of what God has given to you. Amen.

So let's pray.

Father, thank you for this opportunity to share Lord just even just only two pieces of the armor. I didn't even get to finish everything. But Lord, I trust Lord that you wanted me to share what you had to say to your people. And God, I pray that you would help them through understanding these components, Lord. Wherever they are at in understanding to even better understand Lord, so that they can just be better in being more fit for the battle and continue to advance for the kingdom work. Blessed to this end, Lord, and and may you, Father, be glorified in all this be praised and glorified. We ask all these things in Jesus name. Amen.