



FAITH BUILDING THOUGHT – When we are secured with God’s Truth, His righteousness gives us the confidence to stand against the schemes that seek to overtake us.

Ephesians 6:10-14 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness”

1. God’s Given _____ vs. Man’s _____ Protection

- (Isaiah 59:14-17)*
- Fits perfectly
 - Stays in place securely
 - Protects completely
 - Motivated by God’s Character

- (1 Samuel 17:31-39)*
- Untested
 - Hastily put together
 - Always needs adjusting
 - Creates areas of vulnerability

2. God’s Given _____ vs. Man’s _____ Heart

- (Ezekiel 36:22-32; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:22)*
- Gives new life
 - Provides what we are truly seeking
 - Reflects God’s faithfulness

(Jeremiah 17:9-10; Matthew 15:17-19)

- Deceitful
- Incomprehensible
- True character unable to be hidden

3. God’s Given _____ vs. Man’s _____ Righteousness

- (2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 5:6; Psalm 24:3-5; Proverbs 4:18; Genesis 15:6; 2 Timothy 4:8)*
- God’s righteousness is placed within and upon us
 - Gives light and direction during internal and external darkness
 - Is not withheld to those who seek and pursue God’s righteousness
 - Has eternal impact

- (Isaiah 64:6; Isaiah 46:12)*
- Does not compare to God’s righteousness
 - Is temporary
 - Leads us away from God and His standards
 - Is counterfeit

4. God’s Given _____

- (Romans 1:17; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 13:13)*
- Faith
 - Hope
 - Love



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BACKGROUND:

Today Pastor Kevin preached about the Breastplate of Righteousness (*Ephesians 6:14*). This is a key piece of the Armor of God which represents His strength that He extends to each of us who are His children. The breastplate worn by a Roman soldier was made of metal, a plate of bronze or perhaps chainmail. Its function was to protect the heart and other vital organs.

DIGGING DEEPER:

God puts on the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation as the armament of Christ. (Isaiah 59:16-17) We are to do the same.

1. Who does the armor belong to?
2. What does it mean to "put on" the breastplate of righteousness?
3. How does putting on armor require a decision and action on your part?
4. For what purpose do we put it on?

To put on the breastplate of righteousness we must first have the belt of truth firmly in place, sinched tightly. Without truth our righteousness will be based upon our own attempts to impress God.

5. Can you draw from examples in the Bible, or perhaps your own life, where man's attempts to be righteous fell short of pleasing God?
6. What was Jesus' attitude toward the Pharisees and the scribes regarding their self-righteousness? Read *Matthew 23:27* and discuss.

2 Corinthians 5:21 states, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

7. What righteousness does the breastplate represent?
8. What did Jesus have to do to purchase our righteousness?
9. Read *Isaiah 57:12*; *64:6*. How does our self-righteousness compare to Christ's righteousness?

God not only wants your heart, but He also wants you to protect it.

10. What does the breastplate protect our heart from?
11. Jeremiah warned Israel that "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure." (*Jeremiah 17:9*) What did he mean by that? How has your heart ever deceived you?
12. What steps can you take to guard your heart?

TAKING IT HOME:

God wanted Aaron to wear the "breast piece of decision" to symbolize that the high priest represented the people before God: "Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart ... as a continuing memorial before the Lord" (Exodus 28:29). With the Breastplate of Righteousness, the believer wears the righteousness of Christ before the people. It protects while at the same time proclaims that any righteousness we display comes from the Lord and not ourselves.

13. What does "putting on" righteousness look like in your life?
14. Can you think of someone you know who does this well?
15. How can your putting on God's armor be a memorial to the Lord?