



“SPIRITUAL WARFARE!!!” (Part 3)

EPHESIANS 6:10-17

“Put on the BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!”

> Ephesians 6:14 - **having put on the breastplate of righteousness,**

> Paul’s description of a Roman soldier’s armor is on display for our spiritual armor to fight the good fight of faith against our enemy the devil. It is interesting to note that a Roman soldier was trained to march twenty miles a day while wearing 45 pounds of armor. One of the most protective elements of his armor was the breastplate made of solid metal, whereas in the later years of the Roman Empire the Roman military wore a chest guard made of tightly woven chains to create ease of mobility. The breastplate protects the heart, lungs, stomach, and sides of the soldier; there is also protective plate for the back.

- The Christian’s breastplate protects our heart for God in the same way as we are to ***“love the Lord your God with all your heart”*** (Matt. 22:37); and to worship God with all our lungs, the Scripture says, ***“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!”*** (Ps 150:6)

In spiritual warfare the devil will try to dissuade your love for God through various temptations and lusts, causing one to follow the devil’s unrighteous ways!

Interestingly thirty years later Jesus exhorts this church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7 - ***“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.””***

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, you discover at least twenty references to love. Jesus says to this church ***“you have left your first love.”*** Our motivation for all we do in the Kingdom of God must be presented through our love for Jesus, it is only as we love Christ fervently that we can serve Him faithfully. Our love for Him must be pure (Eph 6:24).

> *What is this RIGHTEOUSNESS that we must put on?*

- The words *righteous or righteousness* is found 577 times in the Bible.

- According to the *Nelson's Bible Dictionary* RIGHTEOUSNESS is holy and upright living, in accordance with God's standard. The word *righteousness* comes from a root word that means "straightness." It refers to a state that conforms to an authoritative standard. Righteousness is a moral concept. God's character is the definition and source of all righteousness (Gen 18:25; Deut 32:4; Rom 9:14). Therefore, man's righteousness is defined in terms of God's.

In the Old Testament the term *righteousness* is used to define man's relationship with God (Ps 50:6; Jer 9:24) and with other people (Jer 22:3). In the context of relationships, righteous action is action that promotes the peace and well-being of human beings in their relationships to one another.

For example, Adam and Eve would have acted righteously in their relationship with God if they had obeyed Him, because His commands defined that relationship. The Ten Commandments and related laws defined Israel's relationship with God. To obey those laws was to act righteously, because such obedience maintained the covenant relationship between God and His people.

The sacrificial system in the Old Testament and the cross of Jesus in the New Testament shows man's need for righteousness. Sin is disobedience to the terms that define man's relationship with God and with other people. Since the FALL in the Garden of Eden, man is inherently unrighteous. As the prophet Isaiah said, "*We are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away*" (Isa 64:6). Man cannot be righteous in the sight of God on his own merits. Therefore, man must have God's righteousness imputed, or transferred, to him.

The cross of Jesus is a public demonstration of God's righteousness. God accounts or transfers the righteousness of Christ to those who trust in Him (Rom 4; Gal 3:6; Phil 3:9). We do not become righteous because of our inherent goodness; God sees us as righteous because of our identification by faith with His Son.

> Let us look to Romans chapter 4 – 5:2 for insight on forging our BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!

- Within this chapter we find a key word mentioned eleven times, it is "ACCOUNTED," in Greek *logizomai*, which is translated by the English verbs "*account*," "*count*," and "*impute*" (vv.3,4,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24). Literally "*to put to one's account*."

(v1-4) ABRAHAM, the father of FAITH! – Abraham was found righteous through faith and not by works, this brings the BLESSINGS of God! This account of righteousness through faith is before the right of circumcision and 600 years before God gave the law to Moses.

(v5-8) DAVID reveals the blessedness of FAITH and FORGIVENESS in Psalm 32. David understood faith, grace, mercy, and the forgiveness God. He committed adultery, lied and murdered; yet God convicted him of his sins, David REPENTS, and God FORGAVE!

- David made two amazing statements:

(1) God forgives sins and imputes righteousness apart from works;

(2) God does not impute our sins.

- In other words, once we are justified, our record contains Christ's perfect righteousness and can never again contain our sins. Christians do sin, and these sins need to be forgiven if we are to have fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7); *but these sins are not held against us.* God does keep a record of our works, so that He might reward us when Jesus comes; but He is not keeping a record of our sins.”

- John the beloved assures us of God’s forgiveness through the righteousness of our Savior in 1 John 1:9-2:2 - *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS. And He HIMSELF is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

(v9) Abraham BELIEVED God and it was accounted unto him for RIGHTEOUSNESS, then fourteen years later he was circumcised. Thus he became the “father of FAITH” for the circumcised and the uncircumcised.

(v10) Abraham received circumcision as a sign of consecration to God, a seal of RIGHTEOUSNESS!

(v11) Today Christians have a different seal found in Ephesians 1:13-14 - *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the HOLY SPIRIT of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

(v12) Faith in Christ has circumcised our flesh and wiped out the judgment of the law! - Colossians 2:11-15- *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through FAITH in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of*

your flesh, He has made ALIVE together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having DISARMED principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, TRIUMPHING over them in it.

- Let us embrace four PROMISES OF GOD found in verses 13-25!

(v13-15) Promise #1 – We are RIGHTEOUS through faith!

(v16) Promise #2 – We are saved by GRACE through faith!

(v17-22) Promise #3 – We are ALIVE through Christ! Spiritually born again! Abraham became a father of many NATIONS through faith, as God gave LIFE to the dead!

- One commentator writes, “It was when Abraham admitted that he was “dead” that God’s power went to work in his body. It is when the lost sinner confesses that he is spiritually dead and unable to help himself that God can SAVE him.”

(v23-25) Promise #4 - Jesus died (because of our OFFENSES) and ROSE again because of His RIGHTEOUSNESS; now by faith in Christ our sins are FORGIVEN, we receive His RIGHTEOUSNESS, and we will go to HEAVEN!

- Warren Wiersbe comments on the breastplate of righteousness (v. 14 b) saying, “The breastplate of righteousness symbolizes the believer's righteousness in Christ (2 Cor 5:21) as well as His righteous life in Christ (Eph 4:24). Satan is the accuser, but he cannot accuse the believer who is living a godly life in the power of the Spirit. The life we live either fortifies us against Satan's attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us (2 Cor 6:1-10). When Satan accuses the Christian, it is the righteousness of Christ that assures the believer of his salvation. But our positional righteousness in Christ, without practical righteousness in the daily life, only gives Satan opportunity to attack us.”

- Paul encourages us in Romans 6:18 - You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

> Lastly, beware of SATAN’S UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION!

- Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 - The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- What is the unrighteous deception, and had pleasure in unrighteousness? Let us go to Romans 1:16 – 2:11.

Proverbs 11:30 - *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives.*

Peter writes in 1 Peter 3:12 - *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*"

Proverbs 14:34 - *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*