

Call of Duty Pt 5 “The Breastplate of Righteousness”

CENTRAL QUESTION:

How do we protect our spiritual hearts in the daily battle we face as soldiers in God's army?

I. UNDERSTANDING OUR POSITION IN GOD'S ARMY

Key Scripture: Ephesians 6:14 - "Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."

Key Truths:

- When we become born again, we become both servants and soldiers in God's army
- We are in a real battle with a real enemy
- Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world
- We are going to win this war

Important Distinction:

- Everyone is enlisted in God's army
- Not everyone is called to be a "Navy SEAL" or pastor
- There's nothing wrong with desiring leadership, but everyone isn't cut out for it
- That doesn't make you a failure - you're still a born-again child of God

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE BREASTPLATE

Understanding the Physical Armor:

- The Roman soldier's breastplate had one purpose: to protect the heart and lungs
- Made of overlapping steel or chain mail
- Could not be penetrated by sword, spear, or arrow

- You can lose a finger or take an arrow in the leg and still fight
- But if you take one in the heart, you're done

The Spiritual Application:

- Paul was likely looking at a Roman soldier when writing this letter
- The breastplate represents righteousness - right standing with God
- This isn't salvation righteousness, but daily walk with God righteousness
- It protects the spiritual heart that drives everything we do

III. UNDERSTANDING THE HEART IN SCRIPTURE

The Heart Represents Multiple Aspects:

A. PERSONALITY

- Big-hearted
- Hard-hearted
- Soft-hearted
- Cold-hearted

B. EMOTIONS

- "That tugged at my heart"
- "That broke my heart"
- "Pulled at my heartstrings"

C. DECISION-MAKING

- "Follow your heart" (can lead to trouble)
- The heart can be deceitful
- Can lead to bad decisions when not guarded

D. DRIVE AND DETERMINATION

- Heart to win (in sports)

- Heart to drive
- Heart to continue when you want to quit

E. RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- "I gave my heart to Christ"
- Not the physical organ, but the spiritual side
- The core of who we are

IV. THE DANGER OF AN UNPROTECTED HEART

The Problem:

We often get up, get dressed physically, but don't put on our spiritual breastplate of righteousness

Enemy Attacks Include:

- Shooting darts at our emotions
- Making us doubt our salvation
- Telling us we're not saved
- Saying we're not where we need to be
- Convincing us we won't make it
- Making us feel nobody cares about us
- Projecting others' failures onto us

The Weight of Spiritual Attack:

- Feels like pressure on your chest
- Feels like weight pushing and squeezing
- Relief comes when we make the decision to follow God
- The righteousness of God guards this vital area

What's at Risk:

- Our homes are in danger

- Our walk with God is in danger
- Our whole lives are in danger
- If we leave our hearts unprotected, everything is endangered

V. HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HEART (PRACTICAL APPLICATION)

A. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Key Truth: It's YOUR job to check your armor, not the pastor's

The Soldier's Duty:

- Roman soldiers checked their own armor daily
- Not the captain's or sergeant's responsibility
- They checked for cracks and damage
- If something was wrong, they got it fixed before battle
- You don't want to go into heated battle with damaged armor

Your Spiritual Duty:

- Check your own spirit
- Don't expect the preacher to run you down
- Don't wait for someone to check on you
- Take care of your spiritual body like you do your physical body
- You don't need someone to call and ask if you ate or bathed
- You don't need someone to check if you took your spiritual "shower"

B. DAILY PRACTICES

Morning Prayer:

- "Lord, help me get through this day"
- "Help me be encouraged"

- "Help me be a light to You"
- "Let me build Your kingdom today"

Evening Prayer:

- "Father, help me today"
- "If there's anything I need to correct, show me"
- "Forgive me for things I don't even realize I've done"
- "Lord, help me and forgive me"

C. STAYING IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Commune with God on your own
- Stay in the Word
- Regular prayer time
- This is not a one-shot deal - it's daily
- Cover your spiritual heart by staying connected to God

VI. ADDRESSING FALSE EXPECTATIONS

What's NOT the Pastor's Job:

- To run you down when you're absent
- To daily keep up with you
- To check your spiritual armor for you
- To make sure you're spiritually "bathed"
- To call and see if you're reading your Bible

What IS the Pastor's Job:

- To feed you when you come
- To pray for you and uplift you
- To counsel with you if you need it

- To pray with you when asked

The Truth:

- You can't put on someone else's righteousness
- The pastor's righteousness won't save you
- Your own righteousness is as filthy rags
- You must put on HIS righteousness (God's)

VII. STANDING AGAINST NEGATIVITY

Real-Life Example from the Sermon:

Person at a wedding: "You'll never fill that building. It'll be full for a couple years then bottom out."

The Response:

"Just because you're a failure and where you go is a failure doesn't mean we have to be a failure, because we're putting on the armor of God."

The Victory Mindset:

- We're going to win the lost for Jesus
- We're going to build the kingdom of God
- We're going to see people saved
- We're going to see people baptized
- We're going to see people filled with the Spirit of God
- We're going to see drug addicts restored
- We're going to see homes restored

Warning:

Leave your negative attitude at the door - we'll have somebody check it when you come in

VIII. THE TRANSFORMED HEART

Before Christ:

- In the spirit realm, our hearts were diseased before knowing Jesus
- Not talking about physical heart, but spirit heart
- We were dead spiritually

After Christ:

- He changed our hearts
- We passed from death unto life
- We know this because we have love for the brethren
- We have love for people
- We want to see people saved and born again
- We want to see others blessed and prosper

The Evidence of a Protected Heart:

- Love for people
- Desire to see churches full
- Wanting others to succeed
- Blessing others' homes and children
- Not being bitter or cold
- Making decisions by the Spirit, not just emotions

KEY TAKEAWAY:

The breastplate of righteousness is not about your own goodness - it's about maintaining right standing with God through daily communion with Him. Just as Roman soldiers were responsible for checking their own armor before battle, you are personally responsible for putting on your spiritual armor daily and protecting your heart from the enemy's attacks.

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How is your heart today?
- Is it bitter or cold?
- Have you made bad decisions by following your heart instead of the Spirit?
- Are you checking your spiritual armor daily?
- Are you staying in right relationship with God?
- What areas of your heart need God's protection today?

Scripture References for Further Study:

Ephesians 6:10-18 | Psalm 139:7-10 | Proverbs 4:23 | Jeremiah 17:9 | 1 John 3:14 | Matthew 15:18-19 | Proverbs 27:19