

I. Introduction

- A. *"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. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always..."* (Ephesians 6:13-18)
- B. There is an unceasing war between God and the devil, heaven and hell, angels and demons, truth and lies.
- C. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life... even as the devil hates you and has a diabolical plan for your life.
- D. Satan spews his acid onto absolutely everything you touch, and he doesn't play fair.
  - 1. He attacks your faith. He goes after your love life. He beats on your identity and relationships and moral code.
  - 2. Everything is fair game.
- E. But God has not left us on our own. He has given us everything we need to stand strong and tall and to repel the devil's attack.
- F. Welcome to part 8 in our series. The series is called The Christian in Complete Armor. We have been opening our hearts and minds to the Bible, and specifically to this place in the Bible in Ephesians.
- G. Scripture here describes the armor of God.
- H. So we are looking at each piece in the armor of God.
- I. We started with the belt of truth. We saw that for us to stand in victory, we have to set our lives in reality...
- J. Then last time, we studied the Breastplate of Righteousness.
  - 1. I planned to move on to the next piece of armor today, but I'm not doing that. I kept getting pulled back to this same piece of armor, the breastplate of righteousness. Because I want to go deeper here.
- K. So please think with me today once again on:
  - 1. **The Breastplate of Righteousness, part 2**
    - a) I'm going to tell you that we will take a break from this series for December. That's because we dedicate December to evangelism, so I'll preach messages inviting the family and friends that you bring here to be saved.
    - b) And then in January, I will start the year with a stand alone message or two.
    - c) And after that we'll get back into this series on spiritual warfare, The Christian In Complete Armor, because it is so needed in these days.
- L. So let's mash up some places in the Bible today.

II. David and Saul's Armor

- A. You probably know at least a little about David and Goliath. You might know that David, the young shepherd, defeated Goliath, the warrior-giant, with a slingshot and five smooth stones.
- B. What you might not know is that before David went out to battle Goliath, he met with King Saul. The problem was that David was a shepherd and he didn't have armor. So King Saul, who was a coward, said, Here, David, take my armor.
  - 1. *Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."* (1 Samuel 17:32-33)
- C. Nice pep talk, King.
- D. So David said, Look, I'm a shepherd, I've fought mountain lions, I've fought bears. And besides, it's not me who has to fight the giant. It's God, so don't worry.
- E. So King Saul said, David, you're nuts, But if you want to try, here, wear my armor.
  - 1. *"So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. David fastened his sword to his armor..."* (1 Samuel 17:38-39a)
- F. Over there, taunting, mocking, insulting, hurting... over there is Goliath. He is an ambassador of Demons. He is a servant of Satan, and an envoy of Hell.
  - 1. Goliath is every giant you face. Goliath is every attack from the dark side. Goliath is the thing that makes you afraid, the worries that assail you, the addictions that control you, the dysfunctions that defeat you... the doctrines of demons and the flood of fictions sent from hell to devour you.
- G. Over here is the little shepherd nobody believes in.
  - 1. Whatever can you do?
  - 2. Your friends, and your family, and your logic, and your culture... all say, "You're doomed, but here, wear Saul's armor."
    - (1) Use human means to fight demonic battles. Use human effort to conquer spiritual problems. Use the flesh to battle the flesh... This is the temptation.
    - (2) **1. TEMPTATION: The temptation in spiritual warfare is to use NATURAL weapons to fight battles only SUPERNATURAL weapons can win.**
- H. We'll come back to this.

III. The Breastplate of Righteousness

- A. The breastplate covered the heart and all the organs in the thoracic cavity, front and back.
- B. I'm not going to go over it again, but this region of the body represents emotional health. It represents your psychology, and your psychological health.
  - 1. Paul talks about it, because your psychological health sits in the crosshairs of the devil's attack.
  - 2. He wants to make you depressed, discouraged, dysfunctional, defeated, and if he can do it... dead... by your own hand.
  - 3. This verse is not a joke:

- a) *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1 Peter 5:8)
  4. Well, what’s he devouring? What is the devil eating for lunch? Not your body, but your soul.
    - a) Your life. Your happiness. Your joy. Your love. Your sense of identity, your sense of agency. He’s eating your dominion. Your purpose. Your mission.
  5. All those things that have to do with psychological wholeness, happiness, and health.
  6. And that is precisely what the breastplate protects.
  - C. So that breastplate, Scripture says, is this thing called righteousness.
    1. So if you are going to stand undefeated emotionally, you need to wear the breastplate of righteousness.
  - D. But what is righteousness?
    1. As I showed you last time, righteousness simply means goodness. And specifically, righteousness is goodness that is good enough for God.
      - a) I also mentioned Romans 3:10, which says there is no one righteous, no not one... and Romans 3:12, which says there is no one who does good, no not one.
      - b) So we are by nature unrighteous.
      - c) But all that changes when you get saved.
  - E. When you get saved, God clothes you in his own righteousness. He take his own divine righteousness — which is far better than human righteousness — and drapes it over you like a robe.
    1. *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”* (Isaiah 61:10)
  - F. Here is something God has given. Here is a gift from heaven to you. Here is something you receive the very moment that you are saved. The righteousness of God. Applied to your account.
    1. You didn’t produce it, earn it, strive for it, or break a sweat for it. God bestowed it upon you.
    2. And this means that you are good enough for God. This means you can live with nothing left to prove. This means that when God sees you he sees you as being just like Christ, if you have been saved.
      - a) **2. BREASTPLATE: The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).**
      - b) *“For God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21)
        - (1) It’s not you being good, it’s Christ being good. It’s not your righteousness, it’s God’s righteousness. (Philippians 3:9).
      - c) It is not Saul’s armor that will make the giants fall in the psychology and emotions of your life.
  - G. The invincible protection that stands between the devil’s attack and your psychological health is your faith to wear the breastplate of righteousness...
  - H. Let me decode that.
    1. **3. GUARDIAN: The invincible guardian that stands between the devil’s attack and your psychological health is your tenacity to stand in the righteousness of Christ.**
  - I. And I want to decode that too, and to do it. I want to go to a prophet from the Old Testament.
  - J. Like I said, we’re mashing together a lot of places in the Bible.
- IV. Isaiah
- A. Here is one of the most soul-soothing places in Scripture... these word come from a prophet thousands of years ago.
    1. *“For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness [hesed = grace] shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy [racham = emotional tenderness] on you. “O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, And lay your foundations with sapphires.”* (Isaiah 54:10-11)
  - B. The prophet is speaking to hurting, scared people. People who have given up hope.
  - C. And the message he brings is both theological and psychological at the same time.
    1. It is a theology of God who is full of grace and tender mercies.
    2. It is a psychology of a life so good it is built on a foundation and protected by walls made of sapphires and gems, meaning beauty and abundance, and all of that given in exchange for affliction. But then we get this:
  - D. *“In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; And from terror, for it shall not come near you.”* (Isaiah 54:14)
    1. In righteousness you shall be established.
    2. That’s God’s righteous gift, not your righteous living. I’ll prove it in a minute.
    3. Think of your walk with the Lord. And ask yourself, Are you established in this truth of righteousness? The word *established* means stable, stabilized. Life can be destabilized, and life can be stabilized.
      - a) Do you believe in the righteousness of God in Christ, credited and counted and imputed to you once for all when you were saved?
      - b) Have you been made “the righteousness of God in Christ” or not?
      - c) Because if you stand it that, God promises you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear. Far from demonic oppression. Far from emotional oppression. Far from financial oppression. Far from political oppression.
      - d) There will be something in your soul that cancels these things. Something that nullifies the bullies and fires a lethal stone into the forehead of your giants.

4. You shall be far from terror for it shall not come near you.
  - a) But the Bible says when you are established in righteousness, you will be far from oppression for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.
5. The more you can say, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ" these promises come true.
  - a) When you face an obstacle, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ."
  - b) When you meet a giant, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ."
  - c) When you confront a lie, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ."
  - d) When you defy a dysfunction, attack an addiction, dislodge a demon, flatten a mountain, defeat your despair, I am the righteousness of God in Christ.
6. I am good enough for God. And if I am good enough for God... then...
7. I am good enough for this conflict, by the grace and love of God.
  - a) **4. STABILIZED: To stand in the gift of Christ's righteousness is to stabilize your soul and to protect your heart.**
8. But you say, I'm not righteous. I keep doing bad stuff. I'm unlucky. I'm not worthy. I'm defeated. I'm stuck.
9. That's not going to help you. You need new scripts and a new outlook. You need new habits. New patterns. New self-talk based on Scripture, not the devil's lie.
10. But when you say, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ," Jesus is glorified.
  - a) And then we get this:
- E. *"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD."* (Isaiah 54:17)
  1. This fallen world is a morally broken pain machine. Weapons will be formed. Weapons will be formed by the enemy of your soul against you.
    - a) They will come from the lips of friends. They will come from the comments on social media. They will come from the songs you hear. They will come from teachers and professors. They will come from the left from the right and from below.
      - (1) Weapons will be formed against you.
  2. But no weapon formed against you shall prosper. Every tongue which rises against you in judgment, you shall condemn.
  3. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. And do not miss that next line.
  4. *And their righteousness is from me*, says the Lord.
  5. There it is. Not my righteousness but his. Not I but Christ.
  6. Do you see this? Do you believe it?
    - a) Today, we are not condemned. We stand in the unclouded favor of Christ, because of his blood. We stand justified because of his sacrifice. And we stand vindicated, not in spite of his holiness, but because of his holiness.
  7. You are to be emotionally stabilized and strengthened in the righteousness of God.
    - a) **5. VICTORY: When you stand in the righteousness of Christ, no weapon formed against you shall prosper.**
  8. So you pray...
    - a) O God I am not strong enough, not smart enough, and not good enough in myself to face this battle. But I take refuge in the shadow of your wing. And I stand clothed in the robe of your perfect righteousness.
    - b) Therefore I step into this stupid mess with the battle cry of victory on my lips. And I stand, tall and strong, in the victory of Christ... *because* I stand confident and secure in the righteousness of Christ.
    - c) So I declare that no weapon formed against me shall prosper.
    - d) And I say that every tongue which raises itself against me and judgment, I hereby condemn.
  9. God says, your righteousness is from ME. And that is what you are established in. And the more you are established in it, the more these promises come true in your life.
  10. I have had many critics through the years. And I'm not going to lie, it hurts, and it undercuts my confidence too many times. My insecurities rise up and my heart sinks. It's easy to get discouraged. So I have to come back to this again and again.
  11. I have to say, I am the righteousness of God in Christ. He will vindicate me. He will come against my enemies. He will make their swords shatter, and the missiles go astray. He will frustrate their aims, and prevail over their plans.
  12. So I want to give you five words to say, five words to mutter, five words to literally come out of your mouth, every single time the devil attacks your soul.
  13. I mean when you feel like you're losing your mind, or you're under attack.
  14. You have to change what comes out of your mouth. You have to make what the Bible calls a good confession.
  15. Back to...
- V. David and Saul's Armor
  - A. There is young David standing before King Saul. And over there is the wicked Giant Goliath, sent from the pit of hell to humiliate him.
    1. *"So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, 'I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them.' So David took them off."* (1 Samuel 17:38-39)
  - B. David took them off... Oh Christian, learn this lesson, and keep coming back to it.
    1. **6. USELESS: The more relentless the supernatural attack, the more useless the natural armor.**
  - C. David took off Saul's armor. It didn't fit. It wouldn't work. He couldn't move. He couldn't breathe. It wasn't for him.
  - D. We are talking about the divine breastplate of righteousness, not the breastplate of coping mechanisms you've developed.
  - E. Sooner or later, you need to take off the armor that you've invented to shield you from harm... and trade it in for God's armor.
    1. You need to take off running away from problems.

2. You need to take off glossing over spiritual problems with material success.
  3. You need to take off the armor of being the class clown.
  4. You need to take off the mask that you don't care — that you're indifferent — when you do care, and your pain runs deep.
  5. You need to take off drugs, and alcohol, and sexual sin... they're just numbing the pain of a wounded heart... but never healing the wound.
  6. You need to take off the self-talk that keeps you locked in despair...
    - a) I'm unlucky. I'm not good enough. God is against me. I'm a failure. I am cursed. I am not worthy of love. I am too different, too weird, too messed up for anyone to care. I am damaged goods. I look wrong, sound wrong, walk wrong, think wrong.
  7. Put a guard on your lips, and say something else. And I want to give you the something else. Five words.
  8. Say five words to the problem. Say them to the mountain. Say them to the giant. Say them to the enemy. Say them to the demons and to the devil. But more important than all, say them to yourself.
  9. I'm counseling you to change the habit of your heart by changing the habit of the words you speak to your life, your soul, your world.
- F. *"Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for...' (1 Samuel 17:45-47)*
1. Oh, my dear, hunted, haunted, wounded friend. Confused. Sad. Angry. Bitter. Unwanted or unloved. Ashamed. Bitter. Or just done. You carry a load no human can bear. You fight a fight no human can win.
    - a) But the Lord does not save with a sword and spear or with any device of human device.
  2. Here are five words to set you free. Five words to immediately put on the breastplate of righteousness and to make God your stronghold in even the saddest struggle.
  3. David declared them...
    - a) *"Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S" (1 Samuel 17:47)*
  4. The Battle Is the Lord's.
  5. Say it. Mutter it. Pray it. Declare it. Believe it.
  6. The Battle is the Lord's.
    - a) You can't run away from it, but the battle is the Lord's. You have to step into it, but the battle is the Lord's. You trust Christ in you to live through you in it, declaring the battle is the Lord's. You keep the faith, because the battle is the Lord's. You still show honor and respect, because the battle is the Lord's. You take a risk, step out in faith, because the battle is the Lord's. You guard your tongue, because the battle is the Lord's. You override fear with courage, because the battle is the Lord's. You step into the room, engage the awkward conversation, swallow your pride ask for the date, you send in the application, you have the confrontation, you deliver the apology and say an overdue I'm sorry, you somehow, somehow step into the great unknown... onto the battlefield of the devil's world... and you live boldly
    - b) Because the Battle is the Lord's!
- (1) 7. SIMPLE: When the battle is the Lord's, my life is so much more simple.**
7. Your job is faith. God's job is outcomes. And Scripture promises... faith is the victory.
  8. It doesn't matter if you look dumb. It doesn't matter even the outcomes. It doesn't even matter if you, in the natural fail. Because in the spiritual, you are a champion, and you are glorious, and you are more than a conqueror, and for one shining moment, you have dominion, so the angels are applauding, and then demons are fleeing, and the devil is pouting, and your God is smiling, and your heart is strengthening, and your psychology is healing, and your burden is lightening, and your muscles are growing, and your maturity is deepening, and your world is transforming, and eternal treasures beyond imagination are being stored up for you, heaps and heaps of them that will one day make you say it was worth it all.
  9. Oh, Jesus, the All conquering King before me, behind me, above me, below me, all around me, and in me... the battle is the Lords.
  10. What matters is that you overcame all that emotional resistance inside of you and for the first time, maybe in a long time, you did what God was calling you to do, saying as you did it. THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S. When you do that, there is no such thing as failure.

## VI. Armor

- A. **Almighty God, today, I put on the full armor of God.**
  1. **I put on the BELT OF TRUTH, to understand the times in which I live.**
  2. **I put on the BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, to guard and protect my heart.**
  3. **I put on the BOOTS OF THE GOSPEL, for my mission in a hurting world.**
  4. **I take up the SHIELD OF FAITH, to believe my God no matter what.**
  5. **I wear the HELMET OF SALVATION, to guard my mind from delusion and despair.**
  6. **I carry the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, to defeat the darkness and lift high the Cross.**
- B. **I declare myself a soldier of the Cross.**
- C. **I stand in the Victory of Christ.**
- D. **I make you, God, my stronghold today.**
- E. **Amen.**