

The Armour of God

Ephesians 6:10-24

The Breastplate of Righteousness

What purpose does a breastplate serve?

The breastplate was the central part of the Roman soldiers armour. It protected the vital organs such as heart and lungs which if pierced would invariably cause death. With a sturdy well-made breastplate, an attack would become ineffective and useless as the blows would just glance off the armour.

Why is righteousness associated with a breastplate?

Proverbs 11:4

*⁴ Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death.*

Without righteousness we leave ourselves open to attack and almost certain death. Righteousness, like the breastplate deflect and protect us from the attacks of the evil one.

What is righteousness?

Psalm 119:172

¹⁷² My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness.

1 John 3:4

⁴ Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

1 Corinthians 15:34

³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

To be righteous is to do what is right in God's eyes. God's commandments are righteous. Lawlessness is sin, and sin is the opposite of righteousness. So to be righteous is to obey God's laws of love.

Whose righteousness should we be wearing?

Isaiah 64:6

*⁶ But we are all like an unclean thing,
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;
We all fade as a leaf,*

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*And our iniquities, like the wind,
Have taken us away.*

Righteousness will help protect us from death, but whose righteousness are we talking about here? Isaiah 64:6 clearly says that our righteousness is equivalent to filthy rags, which does not make for a very effective breastplate in a battle!

Jeremiah 23:6

*⁶ In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this is His name by which He will be called:*

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Quite obviously it is God's righteousness that we need to defend ourselves.

How do I wear the breastplate of righteousness?

Ezekiel 33:13

¹³ When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.

Once we have put on the breastplate of righteousness we must be sure not to remove it. Ezekiel 33:13 shows us that wearing righteousness is not a one-time event, rather it requires a lifetime of action.

Application –

What laws of God do you find yourself most likely to compromise? We can't expect the breastplate to stay securely fastened unless we remain true to the Word. Once you identify the weaker areas ask yourself the following:

- When do you compromise?
- What prompts it?
- Is it due to certain conditions, environments, situations, company etc?
- Pray it into the light and get it dealt with!

The shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace

What purpose do shoes serve?

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Shoes seem a bit low on the list of items in your armoury, but imagine you are a fully armed soldier. You have your sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, and belt, but your feet are bare. When running into the fray of battle unless he has unbelievably tough feet he will inevitably tread on some debris, maybe just a twig or stone, but on a bare foot this can cause some serious pain. Worrying about where to put your feet in the middle of a battle is one thing you don't want to have to think about!

Shoes allow us to step freely and without fear whilst we turn our full attention to the battle at hand.

What does the gospel of peace have to do with shoes?

Romans 10:14-15

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,^[a]
Who bring glad tidings of good things!”*

God's church is sent out to announce the good news to all the earth, to spread His way of peace around the whole world. Having our shoes on, we are ready to move, to spread these glad tidings to those we meet.

How do these spiritual shoes help us stand firm?

John 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

“When we truly allow ourselves to take comfort in the good news promised by God, then there is nothing from outside ourselves that can trouble our hearts or give us reason to be afraid.”(Albert Barnes)

Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33) and so we have nothing to fear from it.

John 16:33

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will^[a] have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Why is it called the gospel of peace?

Isaiah 9:6-7

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⁶ For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The bible makes it clear that when God's kingdom is established and the world lives Gods way faithfully, there will be peace. There will be no more war or fear, only the fullness of peace that comes from living Gods way.

Application –

Where and who can you go to with the gospel of peace?

The Shield of Faith

How did the shield work in the Roman army?

Until now all the items were things you wear, that hold themselves up. The shield is something you take up, something we are required to raise. Just strapping it to your arm is no good, it has to be held up to be effective.

The Roman shield is notoriously famous. It was called a Scutum and was up to 3 ½ feet tall and up to 3 feet wide. It was so well designed that it became feared by all the enemies of the Roman empire and was the one of the soldiers best friends as it afforded a huge amount of protection.

What is faith?

Hebrews 11

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

This is the biblical definition of Faith. Substance is tangible (real/ solid) and evidence is solid proof. Faith is by definition, not some hazy, vague emotion without any sense of reality, it is the irrefutable truth. It is real.

Romans 8:24-25

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²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

You don't hope for what you already have. Faith involves a huge element of trust. We must examine the evidence and see that God has proved himself to be unchanging and consistent, and then we must firmly believe that He will fulfil His promises to us.

Why a shield associated with faith?

Ephesians 6:16

¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

A shield deflects. Satan is always throwing his fiery darts of doubt, worry and fear at us, but the only time they can hit is when we let our shield of faith down, when we stop believing God is in control, we doubt that He is working everything out for our good, that whatever happens is for the ultimate best of everyone involved, however little it seems to be that way.

How else can the shield be used?

The Roman army had an effective strategy with which they used their shields. It was called a 'testudo' or tortoise. When the enemy fired arrows and other airborne projectiles, the Romans would interlock their shields to form an impenetrable shell which required a tremendous amount of effort to stop.

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ— ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

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Ephesians 4:11-16 talks about the whole body being joined and knit together. And if we in God's church join our shields-that is strengthen each other in our faith, building up and serving within the body as we are able-we will become a formidable force able to take on great challenges in Christ.

Application –

Our faith is founded upon the promises of God. How familiar are you with them? Do you know what God has promised you? If your knowledge and trust in God is unsteady than you will be too.