

Topic: Standing Strong in Spiritual Battles Part 3: Breast Plate of Righteousness: Guarding Your Heart
 Text: Ephesians 6:14b Speaker: Pastor Genevieve Kumapley

1. Background & Recap: The Armor of God & Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18)

- Paul describes the **Christian life as a spiritual battle** against the **devil’s schemes** (Ephesians 6:11).
- We are **not fighting against flesh and blood** but against **spiritual forces** (Ephesians 6:12).
- Every believer is **called to stand firm** with the armor of God.

Overview of the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-18)

Paul uses the imagery of a Roman soldier's armor to describe the spiritual armor God provides:

Armor Piece	Function in Battle	Spiritual Application
The Belt of Truth (<i>Eph. 6:14a</i>)	Holds everything together	Knowing and living in God's truth keeps us grounded
The Breastplate of Righteousness (<i>Eph. 6:14b</i>)	Protects the heart and vital organs	Christ’s righteousness defends us from sin and guilt
Shoes of the Gospel of Peace (<i>Eph. 6:15</i>)	Stability and movement	Walking in peace enables us to share the Gospel
Shield of Faith (<i>Eph. 6:16</i>)	Blocks fiery arrows	Faith deflects doubts, fear, and temptations
Helmet of Salvation (<i>Eph. 6:17a</i>)	Protects the head and mind	Renewing our mind with God's promises
Sword of the Spirit (<i>Eph. 6:17b</i>)	Offensive weapon	The Word of God gives us victory over sin
Prayer (<i>Eph. 6:18</i>)	Calls for divine help	Staying in constant communion with God

2. The Role of the Breastplate of Righteousness

A. The Purpose of the Breastplate

- A Roman soldier's breastplate covered the chest and vital organs, especially the heart. It was made of bronze or iron, offering strong protection. Spiritually, righteousness guards our heart from sin, guilt, and attacks from the enemy.

B. Christ’s Righteousness Protects Us

- *"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."* 2 Corinthians 5:21
- We do not rely on our own righteousness but on Christ’s righteousness which comes by faith (*Philippians 3:9*).
- This imputed righteousness (credited to us by faith) ensures we stand before God **holy and blameless**.

Question: *How does understanding Christ’s righteousness change the way we see ourselves?*

3. How Unrighteousness Weakens Our Armor

A. Unrighteousness Creates Spiritual Vulnerability

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." Isaiah 59:2 –

- Sin damages our relationship with God and exposes us to the enemy's attacks.
- When we walk in unrighteousness, it's like wearing a cracked breastplate, allowing the enemy's arrows to pierce through.

B. Biblical Examples of Unrighteousness Weakening Protection

1. **King Saul** (*1 Samuel 15:22-23*)
 - Saul's **disobedience** removed God's protection, leading to **spiritual torment and loss of his kingdom**.
2. **David's Sin with Bathsheba** (*2 Samuel 11-12*)
 - David's **unrighteous choices** led to **personal suffering and family consequences**.
3. **Ananias and Sapphira** (*Acts 5:1-11*)
 - Their **deception** cost them their lives, showing that **unrighteousness brings destruction**.

C. How Sin Leaves Us Exposed

- **Guilt and Shame: Genesis 3:7-10** – Adam and Eve hid from God after sinning.
- **Doubt and Fear: Psalm 37:1-2** – Wickedness leads to instability.
- **Spiritual Defeat: Romans 6:23** – Sin brings death, while righteousness brings life.

Question: *What are some areas where Christians may unknowingly allow unrighteousness to weaken their faith?*

4. Guarding Your Heart with Righteousness

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." *Proverbs 4:23*

Question: *What does it mean to "guard your heart" in today's world?*

Daily Steps to Guard Your Heart

- **Stay in God's Word** – *Psalm 119:11*
- **Pray at all times & for Strength** – *Ephesians 6:18*
- **Surround Yourself with Godly People** – *Proverbs 13:20*
- **Confess and Turn from Sin** – *1 John 1:9*
- **Walk in the Spirit** – "*So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*" *Galatians 5:16*

Questions: *What is one area in your life where you need God's righteousness to protect your heart? What practical step will you take this week to guard your heart? What is one truth you are taking away from today's study? What does a "righteous life" look like in a world filled with distractions and temptations?*

5. Final Take Key Points:

- The breastplate of righteousness is essential for protecting our hearts.
- **Christ's righteousness** protects & defends us, and living righteously strengthens our armor as a defense against sin.
- **Unrighteousness weakens us** and makes us vulnerable to spiritual attacks.
- Guarding our hearts requires **daily spiritual discipline**.