



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

I. Body Armor/Breastplate of Righteousness(Eph. 6:14b)

- ? It was armor that covered the body, both front and back, from the neck to the thighs or navel
- ? Metal (usually brass), or chain mail to protect vital organs
- ? “Take up” – middle voice means you have to put it on & no-one else can put it on for you

II. What Kind of Righteousness is it?

A. It isn't self-righteousness (Phil. 3:9; Isa. 64:6)

- ? Righteousness that lines up with human standards alone
- ? A person believes they are better than or superior to another because they have standards for living that appear to be higher than others around them
- ? Isa. 64:6 “...all our righteous deeds are like filthy rags/polluted garments...”

B. It isn't merely **imputed righteousness** (Rom. 4:6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:21)

- ? Some popular expositors emphasize “imputed righteousness”:
 - o “The breastplate of righteousness is **Christ's righteousness imputed on believers through the gospel**; it is a free gift to us from God by grace & faith. It is not by our works, but by Christ's only. If we have the righteousness of God, we are able to defend ourselves

*against the attacks from the devil. We are able to stand against his accusations concerning our sin & failures.” [Roy Flint, *Narrow Path*, p. 93]*

o *“We are to put on the ‘breastplate of righteousness’ (Eph. 6:14). A breastplate covered the vital organs of a soldier, especially the heart. We have the **imputed righteousness of Christ** which **guards us against...Satan** who tries to strike at the heart of our faith.” [David M. Levy, *Tabernacle: Shadows of Messiah*, p. 148]*

o *“Victory in Imputed Righteousness:...First and foremost, the breastplate of righteousness empowers a believer for victory over Satan because it is energized by imputed righteousness...by the righteousness of Christ that’s credited to the believer’s account in heaven at the moment of his or her salvation...(2 Cor. 5:21) **You put on the breastplate... every morning...by identifying yourself with the righteousness of Christ...by declaring that you are righteous in Christ...through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** That’s how it’s done...What are the consequences when a believer declares that they are unrighteous or rejects the imputed righteousness of Christ? Declaring that you are still a drug addict...an alcoholic, [etc.] after you’ve been saved cancels out a most significant portion of the spiritual authority & power of the breastplate of righteousness in such a believer’s life. So, that’s serious!...[It] cancels out your ability to possess genuine, permanent victory over [what]...you were in the past.” [Clarence Washington Sr., *Victory Every Day in Every Way*, pp.]*

C. It is also *practical or ethical righteousness* (Eph. 5:8b-9; Matt. 6:1-18)

? *“Righteousness means right living—the process by which we apply this truth to our lives &, by His Spirit, produce conduct honoring and pleasing to God.” [Priscilla Shirer, *Fervent: A Woman’s Battle Plan*, p. 47]*

? *“There are **two prominent views** regarding the nature of the righteousness referred to by the breastplate. The **first** view posits an external righteousness to the believer by imputation of Christ’s righteousness. The **second** view posits an internal righteousness of the believer that consists of virtue...After examining the metaphor of the ‘armor of God’ and the context in Ephesians, it is argued that the breastplate is **ethical, consisting of virtues that reflect Christ.**” [D. H. Wenkel, “Breastplate of Righteousness,” *Tyndale Bull.*, V. 58.2, pp. 275-6]*

? *“‘Righteousness’ in the Bible usually refers to imputed righteousness...(2 Cor. 5:21). [However,] while imputed righteousness assures our escaping an eternity in hell, it does not exempt us from the attacks of Satan. Therefore, in **Eph. 6 Paul must be referring to another form of righteousness...‘practical righteousness’**...[i.e.,] obedience. In 1 Tim. 6:11 Paul told Timothy to, ‘pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, & gentleness.’ A righteous & holy life [is] what Eugene Peterson called ‘a long obedience in the same direction’; [this] protects our hearts from Satan’s attacks [&] does ‘not give the devil an opportunity’ (Eph. 4:27).” [Robert Jeffress, *Courageous*, pp.]*

? *“The righteousness Paul speaks of in Eph. 6:14 is **not imputed righteousness**...[Imputed righteousness] is only part of the armor that Ephesians 6:14 is referring to. We also have to deal with **imparted righteousness** which is **only available to us if we [already] have imputed righteousness**. Imparted righteousness is not a sure thing. It is constantly gained by letting the Holy Spirit work in our lives...If we [would] don the full armor of God...we [must] have imparted righteousness.” [Bob Shields, *Crawling out of the Wormhole*, pp. 97-98]*

? *“Truth provides the [framework]; righteousness paints the picture.” (Priscilla Shirer, p. 69)*

? *“To put on the breastplate of righteousness means that Christians are to **reflect the righteousness character of God in their actions.**”* [K. Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, p. 342]

III. God the Warrior (Isa. 59:15b-17)

- A. In our human condition we cannot escape from ourselves (Isa. 59:1-3)
- B. Our lament and confession (Isa. 59:9a, 11b, 12-15a)
- C. There is ‘no man’ to turn things around (Isa. 59:15b-16)

? *“This is an incredible commentary on the Old Testament. There is no man on the scene to be the image of God and rule creation in the wisdom and power of God.”* (Tim Mackie, *Ephesians Classroom*)

- D. God the Warrior moved (Isa. 59:17)

IV. God Calls Us To Be ‘That Man’ (Eph. 2:13-15, 18; 4:1, 17, 22; 5:1, 8b)

- *“Isaiah 59:17 refers to God putting on his attribute of righteousness as a breastplate. Likewise, in (Ephesians 6) believers are, by appropriating God’s righteousness, to **act righteously in their daily dealings with God and humankind.**”* (H. Hoehner)
- *“The ‘breastplate of righteousness’ is from Isaiah 59:17, which describes God’s putting on armor to come in judgment. [However], Paul is not writing about judgment, but the fact that the new being [humanity] is created to be like God.”* [K. Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, p. 342]

- A. The new man, new humanity was created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:13-15, 18)
- B. God gives us responsibility as ‘that man’ (Eph. 3:10; 6:11, 13-14)
- C. Living righteously is to take up the body armor (Eph. 4:1-6:9)

? *“As a soldier’s breastplate protected his chest from enemy attacks, so **sanctifying righteous living guards believers’ hearts against assaults of the devil.**”* (H. Hoehner)