

Breastplate of Righteousness

(Ephesians 6:14b)

Pre-Session Warm Up

In battle, Roman soldiers were in great danger of being stabbed; their battles were fought hand-to-hand with javelins, swords, and daggers. Sometimes during a battle, they would light the end of their arrows with fire and shoot them at their enemies.

God has given us spiritual armor to protect us from our enemy, Satan. Last week we talked about the first piece of a Roman soldier's armor. Who remembers what that was and what it was for? (The belt protected the soldier's vital organs and held the other pieces of the armor in place.) Who remembers from last week how we Christians put on the Belt of Truth? (There are two ways: first, by learning as much as we can of the Bible's truths, and second, by always being truthful in everything we do.)

Opening Prayer

Father, this morning as we learn more about the spiritual battle we are in, I pray that none of us would become frightened. Help us to remember that You are a great and awesome God and that You are mightier than Satan will ever be. Thank You, Lord, for giving us the spiritual armor so we can stand firm against our enemy's attacks. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*"Stand therefore, ...having put on the breastplate of righteousness."
(Ephesians 6:14b)*

Lesson

This week we're going to talk about the next piece of the armor, the breastplate.

It was very important for a soldier to protect his upper body. What is the most important part of your body that the breastplate covers? (Your heart)

The breastplate covered a soldier's body from his neck to his waist — in the front and back. It was made of metal plates or chains so that no sword or arrow could go through it. The shoulder pieces buckled together. They were specially designed so that the shoulders and upper arms of a soldier could move freely, so he could use his weapons in battle. The strips that protected the chest were also fastened with leather cords. This allowed the soldier to twist and turn, yet it still protected the body from harm.

Read Ephesians 6:13-14

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. (14) Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness.

As Christians, you and I need protection for our hearts because Satan often attacks our hearts. Part of Satan's battle plan against us is to place doubt in our hearts and to discourage us from doing the right things. Satan is the one who causes us to get angry and to have feelings of hate in our hearts. And then he makes us feel terrible when we allow these bad feelings to stay in our hearts because he reminds us that God doesn't approve of those kinds of thoughts. Satan whispers into our minds that we aren't good and that discourages us. Satan makes us look at our problems rather than on God's solutions.

That's why it's important to put on the Belt of Truth first. Remember that God loves you and that He'll never leave you nor forsake you. Then, put on the Breastplate of Righteousness to protect your heart.

Who knows what *righteousness* is? If you are righteous, you are doing what is good and right in God's eyes to do. Before we asked Jesus into our hearts it was impossible to please God. But now, you've got the Holy Spirit living right inside your heart who is constantly helping you make the right choices in life.

God Assigned Jesus' Righteousness to Us

When we received Jesus as Lord and Savior, God declared us righteous in His eyes. Like a judge in a court of law, He said, "You are no longer guilty of sin!" Then, He gave us the power to live right.

Romans says not one of us is righteous on our own without Jesus.

Romans 3:10

As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous—not even one.

We are all sinners.

Romans 3:23

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

But when you accepted Jesus as your Savior, God stopped seeing you as a sinner and now sees you as one who has never sinned. Your sins were forgiven the moment you believed that Jesus took the punishment you deserved for the naughty things that you have done. Christ made you right with God.

1 Corinthians 1:30

God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.

Remember God Accepts You

That doesn't mean you won't ever sin again. You and I will fight sin as long as we live on this earth. The battle against sin is one of the hardest for Christians to win. We must always be alert, watching for Satan. He is always trying to tempt us and trick us into sinning. When you and I as Christians do not do right, Satan is quick to point this out to others. That's why we need to confess our sins immediately.

1 John 1:9

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

When Satan tries to make us think that God rejects us, we can resist him by remembering that God accepts us — because we have Christ's righteousness.

In our fight against sin, God wants us to wear the Breastplate of Righteousness. We can put on the Breastplate of Righteousness by living our lives as "rightly" as we know how. Choosing to tell the truth instead of lying. Choosing to be kind instead of hateful. Choosing to obey instead of disobeying. God gives us power to choose right and do it. That's righteous living. By choosing right instead of wrong, you will be protecting your heart with the Breastplate of Righteousness.

The kind of life you live is important. It will either make it easier for Satan to attack you or harder for him to defeat you. Ask God to help you choose right each day.

Closing Prayer

Lord, it is exciting to learn about the Roman soldier and to think about the battles he fought with his spear and shield. But, I pray that today, we can see that we are in a spiritual battle and that it is a real and present danger for us. Help us to remember how important it is for us to put on the armor of God. We need our Belt of Truth and our Breastplate of Righteousness in order that we not fall to Satan's attack. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Felt Board Shape Choices. For a correct answer, the child chooses a colorful shape (circle, square, triangle, etc.) that has a secret amount of points behind it. The team with the most points wins.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What kind of battle are you in now that you're a Christian? (Spiritual)
2. Who's your enemy and what kind of weapons does he have? (We're in a spiritual battle with Satan, whose weapons are temptations to sin.)
3. Why did God give us spiritual armor? (To wear as a suit of protection against the tricks of the devil)
4. What's the first piece of our spiritual armor and how do you put it on? (You put on the Belt of Truth by learning as much as you can of the Bible's truths, and by always being truthful in everything you do.)
5. What's the second piece of the armor and what does it protect? (The Breastplate of Righteousness protects our heart.)
6. Why does our heart need protection? (Satan places doubt in our hearts and discourages us from doing the right things.)
7. What sorts of doubts does Satan put in our hearts? (He makes us question God's Word, the Bible. He makes us doubt that God loves us. He makes us think that we aren't good enough to go to Heaven.)
8. How does Satan discourage us? (He makes us look at our problems, rather than on God's solutions. He can discourage us from doing the right and good things God wants us to do.)
9. How do you put on the Breastplate of Righteousness? (By living our lives as "rightly" as we know how. Choosing to tell the truth instead of lying. Choosing to be kind instead of hateful. Choosing to obey instead of disobeying.)
10. What is "righteousness"? (Doing what is good and right in God's eyes to do.)
11. What does it mean that God has declared you "righteous"? (God has said that you are acceptable. When you received what Jesus did for you on the cross, God stopped seeing you as a sinner and now sees you as one who has never sinned. Your sins are forgiven and are declared by God to be acceptable to Him.)
12. When you and I as Christians do not do what is right, what is Satan quick to do? (He tells us we are unworthy of God's love.)
13. When Satan tells us that we are unworthy of God's love, what should we do? (First, we should confess our sins; second, remember to put on the armor of God. Putting on the Belt of Truth is remembering that God's love for me will never end; putting on the Breastplate of Righteousness is choosing right instead of wrong.)

