

Breastplate of Righteousness

(Ephesians 6:14b)

Introduction

We have been learning about spiritual warfare. The Bible warns us that as followers of Christ we are in a spiritual battle with the devil and need to learn how to protect ourselves against our enemy. Let's review what we've learned so far.

Ask:

- Who is our enemy? (Satan and his army of demons)
- How does Satan attack us? Where is this battle? (The battle is in our minds. He is constantly trying to get us to think, say, and do wrong things.)
- What has God given us to protect us from the enemy? (Spiritual armor.)

We have learned that we are not fully protected if we only use one piece of armor. We must take up all the pieces of the armor of God to resist the enemy when he attacks.

Ask: What is the first piece of the armor? (The belt of truth)

Ask: How do we put on the belt of truth?

There are two ways: first, you must know the truth (Jesus), and second, you must always be truthful and honest in everything you think, say and do. [Teacher, review from our last lesson.]

Ask: How does truth protect us from the attack of the enemy?

Remember, Satan fights with lies.

Ask: What do we know is true about Jesus? (He loves us; He will never leave us; and He will give us the victory in our battle with Satan; He died for our sins.) The truth will extinguish Satan's fiery darts.

Today we will learn about the 2nd piece of the armor of God: the breastplate of righteousness.

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 spiritual armor so we can stand firm against our enemy's attacks. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

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 firm. (14) Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. (Ephesians 6:13-14 ESV)

Lesson

When writing to the believers in Ephesus about the spiritual armor of God, the apostle Paul was in prison chained to a Roman soldier. As he looked at the soldier, he could see that he was armed and ready for battle. It made him think of how important it is for us to be armed and ready for the spiritual battle we are in with Satan.

Paul compared the armor of God with the military gear the Roman soldier wore and explained that each piece of armor represents a part of God's strength He gives us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was very important for a Roman soldier to protect his upper body. He wore a breastplate made of bronze that covered his body from his neck down to about the top of his thighs — in the front and back.

The breastplate was made of metal plates so that no sword or arrow could go through it. It had shoulder pieces that buckled the front plate to the back plate. It was designed so that the shoulders and upper arms of a soldier could move freely. This allowed him to twist and turn, and easily use his weapons in battle, yet still have his upper body protected from harm.

It was fastened to the belt with hooks. If the belt was loose, the breastplate would slip right off.

Ask: What parts of a soldier's body did the breastplate protect?

It covered the soldier's heart, lungs, and other vital organs.

Ask: What is the most important part of your body the breastplate of righteousness protects? (Our heart)

In the same way that a police officer might wear a bullet-proof vest to protect himself from a bullet wound, we must learn to put on the spiritual breastplate of righteousness to protect our hearts from believing Satan's lies because Satan always wants to attack 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. He 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.

That's why it's important to fastened on the belt of truth securely before you hook on the breastplate of righteousness. Hang onto the truth about Jesus and your heart will be protected from Satan's lies.

See how our righteousness is hooked to the truth! By remembering the truth, you will be protecting your heart with the breastplate of righteousness.

Righteousness

Ask: What is *righteousness*? (Being right in the sight of God.)

Only God decides who is righteous. Before we ask Jesus into our hearts, it is impossible to be righteous in God's eyes. But if you have asked Jesus to forgive you and to be the "boss" of your life, then God says you are righteous and He supplies you with the breastplate of righteousness.

Satan will try to tell you that you are not righteous, but now you have the breastplate that will keep his fiery arrows of doubt from piercing your heart.

Hebrews 11:6

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.

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 unrighteous sinners by nature.

Romans 3:23

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

God Assigned Jesus' Righteousness to Us

Ask: How do you get righteousness?

When you asked Jesus to be 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. Now, you will always be righteous in God's eyes.

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.

Jesus paid for your sins with His blood when He was nailed to the cross.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

The moment you believed in Jesus; that is, the moment you trusted that what Jesus did on the cross actually paid for your sin, God gave you a spiritual breastplate specially designed to protect your heart and soul from Satan's lies. At that very moment, God declared you to be righteous in His eyes. Like a judge in a court of law, He said, "*You are no longer guilty of sin!*" Then, He gave you the Holy Spirit who gives you the power to live a righteous life.

That doesn't mean you won't ever sin again. You and I will fight sin as long as we live on this earth. We must always be alert, watching for Satan. He is always trying to tempt us and trick us into sinning.

When we do sin against God, we open a little crack in our armor where Satan's arrows can get through.

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.

As soon as we come to God and ask Him to forgive us, He restores us to right standing with Him.

Putting on the Armor of God

First, you put on the belt of truth: remember God loves you with an everlasting love. Then, put on the breastplate of righteousness by remembering God sees you as righteous because of what Jesus did on the cross. God says you are "*Not guilty*" because Jesus already paid for your sins. Satan will try to make you believe that you are not good enough to go to heaven because of the sinful things you have done, but remember that God says you are righteous in His eyes. And only God's opinion matters!

Summary

We have been learning that Jesus is our spiritual armor, our defense against Satan and his army of demons. We put on the belt of truth by remembering that Jesus is The Truth—His love for us will never end. And, we put on the breastplate of righteousness by remembering because of what Jesus did on the cross, God sees us as righteous.

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 number 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, who fights with lies.)

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? (You put on the breastplate of righteousness when you remember God sees you as righteous because of what Jesus did on the cross.)
10. What is "*righteousness*"? (Being right in the sight of God.)
11. What does it mean that God has declared you "righteous"? (Because of what Jesus did on the cross, God stopped seeing you as a sinner and now sees you as "Not guilty." Your sins are forgiven.)
12. When you and I as Christians do not do what is right, what is Satan quick to do? (He accuses us to the Father and 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. We put on the belt of truth by remembering the truth—His love for me will never end. We put on the breastplate of righteousness when we remember God sees you as righteous because of what Jesus did on the cross.)

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