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"Breastplate of Righteousness"

1. The Real War

Ephesians 6:10 (ESV) "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might."

"Allow yourself to be continually strengthened by the power already made available to you in your new position and relationship with Christ."
(Chip Ingram, *The Invisible War*)

a. The specific Command

Ephesians 6:11 (ESV) "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."

- i. A command to *urgently* put on the spiritual armor
- ii. The armor is provided by Christ, but does not come pre-installed

b. The Reason for the Command

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV) "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

- i. There is an invisible world, and we are in a war
- ii. Our foe is formidable, but not to be feared

1 John 4:4b (ESV) "[...] for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

c. Spiritual Warfare 101

Ephesians 6:13-14 (ESV) "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 [...]"

2. The goal of this morning is to understand how to:

- a. Urgently put on the breastplate of righteousness - in Christian community - so that you can resist the condemnation and accusations of the devil

3. "Breastplate of Righteousness"

a. Righteousness

- i. We are saved by **righteousness** given to us in Christ Jesus

Romans 3:21-24 (NIV) "But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

- ii. **Heresy** that keeps creeping into the church
 - 1. The gospel: Jesus plus keeping the law
 - 2. The gospel: Jesus plus good works
- iii. Eph. 6:14 *righteousness*: right living enabled by our right standing

John 16:8 (ESV) "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

4. Here is how to stand your ground:

a. Pray in the raw

- i. Ask: Is this condemnation or conviction?

1. Is it specific or general?
 2. Is it calling out an action or your identity?
 3. Is it drawing you into or out of relationship?
- b. Pray the truth**
- i. Example **accusation**: “You are too bad to be saved.”
 1. Know the Truth: Romans 3:21-24 NIV
 2. Do the Action: Confess Jesus as Lord, get baptized, belong
- c. Engage the church**
- i. Invite other believers to help you discern between condemnation and conviction
- d. Living rightly**
- i. But what if my heart is still condemning me?

1 John 3:20 (NIV) “If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”

- 5. What does urgently putting on the breastplate of righteousness look like?**
- a. Living rightly when it comes to anger:**

Ephesians 4:26 (NIV) “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

- i. In a state of anger, we need to guard against enemy attack
 1. Temptation: “Let’s hold on to this anger... this is powerful.”
 2. Condemnation: “You call yourself a Christian!”
 - ii. Conviction: Confess and ask for forgiveness if you’ve sinned
- b. Living rightly when it comes to the occult:**
- i. Ex: Tarot cards, ouija boards, demonic movies, horoscope
 - ii. Start with truth

Revelation 21:8 (ESV) “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

- iii. Condemnation: “You can’t come to God anymore!”
- iv. Conviction: Burn, throw away, stop, tell believers, pray

Small Group Discussion Questions:

Ice Breaker: Have you ever had to defend yourself from harm (ex: natural disaster, shot at, animal attack, etc.)? If so, what strategies did you use?

Main Texts: Ephesians 6:10-20, 1 John 3:20, Romans 3:21-24

Questions: (Questions are from “*The Invisible War*” by Chip Ingram pages 109-110):

1. What activities and responsibilities do you fulfill out of a sense of guilt? What steps can you take to remove the sense of guilt and replace it with a devotion to God?
2. How can you tell the difference between the Holy Spirit’s conviction and the enemy’s condemnation?
3. The thought that rebellion opens us up to demonic attack is frightening - and sometimes hard to swallow. What would you tell someone who thinks that obedience is not a big deal to God?
4. Is there anything God has shown you to do that you are not currently doing (or that he has shown you not to do that you are currently doing? If so, what?



Sample Small Group Questions
<https://bit.ly/GroupDiscussionQuestions>



The Overtime Podcast
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