

**Series: Standing Firm
“The Breastplate of Righteousness”
Ephesians 6:14b**

Big Idea – The key to a believer’s armor is a right relationship with God.

Review – 1. Belt of Truth

Satan lies saying, “No absolute truth exists!” So there’s a battle for the minds of our children, our teenagers, our families. **The battle is a spiritual battle.** Today’s spiritual battles are being fought primarily in our culture, politics, schools, and even in our churches. We have to fight spiritual battles with spiritual weapons. If we try to fight in our own strength we will lose. If we passively watch the battle from the safety of silence we will lose. I’m not exaggerating either.

A form of political progressivism, disguised as a move toward social progress, has infiltrated many of our most influential institutions including our schools, the government, the media, large corporations, our military, and even our churches.

Much of this ideology is based on the teaching of philosopher Karl Marx. Marx was an atheist and his ideas are atheistic as well. Atheism is a fundamental pillar of Marxism. He describes faith and religion as "the opiate of the people."

How do we win? We must push back against the lies being told in the battle, with our knowledge of the Truth and use His weapons. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Only Jesus offers life that is truly abundant and free. Christianity and Marxism are not compatible, ultimately they are antithetical and only one will dominate.

We must choose to Stand Firm, to fight or to look the other way as our freedoms including our right to assemble and express our faith are eroded and destroyed. Doubt when I’m saying? Just look at Russia, China, N. Korea, Venezuela, and Cuba to see the resultant tyranny and carnage of Marxism and what real oppression looks like. Don’t be deceived! The saying “It can’t happen here! This America!” is a lie. It is happening here.

There is no middle ground in this battle. There is no fellowship between light and darkness. This war is not about economics or politics or parties or philosophy or left or right extremes. Those are just tactics the enemy uses to keep us divided and polarized. The real war is for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Lordship

versus the Lordship of an anti-Christian ideology. We are Christ's warriors, Ambassadors, and gospel defenders.

Some may not like this plain language but it is the truth. Our enemy will never quit until Jesus Christ defeats him one day. It is our responsibility to arm ourselves with the "whole armor of God" and stand firm.

First we've put on the Belt of Truth.

Let's look now at the breastplate of righteousness.

What the breastplate was.

A full metal jacket protection from neck to thighs

What the breastplate protects:

Heart – the mind, the thinking

"as a man thinks in his heart" Proverbs 23:7

"out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" Mark 7:21

"the heart of man is deceitful ...and desperately wicked" Jeremiah 17:9

Bowels – feelings and emotions

in KJV often figure of speech for feelings of compassionate feelings, or tender mercies

"shutting up bowels of compassion" 1 John 3:17, also Phil. 2:1 "any bowels and mercies"

Satan attacks us then in these 2 areas: in our minds, our thinking, and in our emotions, our feelings. He wants to cloud our minds with false teaching and lies and appeal to the wrong parts of our emotions by evoking evil emotional responses.

Take the mind and emotions together, they include everything that causes us to act and react. All the things then that causes us to act are targeted by Satan.

Satan attacks believers by trying to:

Fill the mind – with lies, perversion, immorality, false ideas – Eph. 2:1-3

Destroy the conscience – get you to do wrong things to sear your conscience, so it doesn't warn you like it's supposed to – 1 Tim. 4:2
Debilitate or weaken your will
Confuse the emotions – cause fear & doubt
Corrupt the desires – tempt to sin – James 1
Draw away affections toward evil – how?

Satan Maximizes the pleasure of sin and Minimizes the penalty of sin.

Philippians 1:9-10 9 This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love;
10 that you will see the difference between good and bad and will choose the good; that you will be pure and without wrong for the coming of Christ;

Righteousness defined – “a right relationship with God” or more simply put “living right”

Three types:

1. Self-righteousness – like the scribes & Pharisees

Jesus' illustration in Luke 18:9-14 – parable of publican & Pharisee

God's Word on self-righteousness - Ephesians 2:8,9; Isaiah 64:6-“filthy rags”;
Romans 3:10-“none righteous, not anyone

The apostle Paul himself – Philippians 3:4-9 – gives his pedigree then says all it amounts to is a pile of horse manure – “dung”

2. Imputed Righteousness – 2 Corinthians 5:21 – Jesus took our sins, literally “became sin for us” that we might have “the righteousness of God in Him” – this is the theological term we use called “justification”

Justified – God sees me “just as if I'd” never sinned.

In Phil. 3:10-14 Paul explains this makes possible Practical Righteousness

3. Practical Righteousness – making your “practice” or behavior match your “Position” or standing in Christ

What you lose without the breastplate of righteousness

1. Joy/Blessing from God – obedience to God’s Word brings blessing, disobedience brings conflict.

What is Obedience? – doing NOW what God says to do with the right heart attitude.

2. Fruitfulness – only possible when we yield to God’s Holy Spirit. We get the fruit, the results of being filled with the Spirit. Galatians 5 says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness...

A “right living” checklist:

1. Faithful in reading the Word of God daily – Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2
2. Daily Quiet time of prayer with the Father – Psalm 55:17
3. Loving your family properly – Colossians 3:18-21
4. Speaking out for Jesus boldly in society – Col. 4:6; 1 Peter 3:15
5. Giving sacrificially to God’s work and being good steward of all you keep – Proverbs 3:9, 10
6. Living right as Bible teaches – obeying God – 1 Samuel 15:22
7. Removing disobedience, unconfessed sin, wrong attitudes, thoughts and deeds – say No to sin – 1 Samuel 15:23

A plea for Righteousness – 1 Peter 2:11, 12a

A heavenly perspective – Hebrews 11:13

“our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20)

1 John 2:15-17

John 15:18, 19

“set your affections on things above” (Colossians 3:2)

1 Corinthians 15:34 “Awake to righteousness and stop sinning”