

Each Study we will begin by reading **Ephesians 6:10-13**.

- We are on a mission – “*Be Strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might*” – The Ephesian letter has two halves. The first boasts of the amazing blessings and strength of Jesus, while the second challenges us to “*walk in a manner worthy...*” (**Eph. 4:1**). That means strength & resolve.
- Satan is unseen but active - “not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers...” This “not, but” construction notes that there will be flesh and blood decisions, but the real issue is the deceitful worker of death behind it, seeking to derail our faith and devour our souls.
- We need armor to survive – “*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*” We cannot defeat Satan and keep our souls from his grip without this armor, ALL of it, every piece, as each is in itself unique.

Strategy – to present 6 studies, giving individual attention to each of the pieces of the armor. We understand they all must fit together, but taking them as a whole doesn’t do justice. So we will keep a review going of what each piece means and add a new layer each lesson.

“Having Girded Your Loins With Truth”

- **This is about the Word of God** (*Eph. 1:13; II Thess. 2:10-12*)
 - Read – that’s how we most easily exemplify “love of the Truth”
 - Study – Real mental energy for the purpose of understanding (*II Tim. 2:15*)
 - Obey – We ain’t wearing it if we don’t walk in it (*Ro. 2:4-8; I Jn 1:5-7; III Jn 3-4*)
- **This is about Fact over Fiction**
 - This word is often used of objective Truth – (*Eph. 4:25; Ac 26:24-26; Ro. 9:1*)
 - These are things that are provable, not lies, and all can see that and agree.
 - So, use the Word to check yourself – “My ideology” “Heritage” “Religion” “Spirituality”
- **This is about Putting on Christ**
 - We fight the devil and his works by putting on Christ – (*Ro. 13:13-14; Eph. 6:14*)
 - Jesus is not only the Word but the Truth of God realized in human form – (*John 1:14-17*)
 - (*Isaiah 11:1-5*) – So we learn of Him, observe Him, and seek to emulate Him entirely.

“Having Put on the Breastplate of Righteousness”

When I read this I think of a song we sing – “*How shall the young secure their hearts and guard their lives from sin? Thy Word the choicest rules imparts to keep the conscience clean.*”

I’m drawn to the picture of a breastplate – The heart, the lifeblood, the inner soul of a man, right there in his chest. If that is unprotected, the rest of the body will not have the strength it needs to function. And how does one protect the spiritual heart and soul? We clothe ourselves with Righteousness. We will discuss what that is tonight, but whatever it is, we need it on us, attached to us, and protecting us.

And yes, as I mentioned this morning, many folks just put all 6 pieces together and say – this is about the Word of God. And I won’t argue that. In fact, my first point is: This is about the Word of God. But there is an element of the Word of God, a concept found within, that must specifically lie over our hearts: righteousness. And to be honest, that needs some defining. If you open one commentary that will say: It is just the Word of God. Others will say, it is your righteous living. Others still, older Calvinist writers, it is Christ’s righteousness imputed upon you. Well, which is it?

- **This is about the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16** – more what it DOES than what it IS)
 - *His Righteousness for Us – HIS GRACE*
 - **Romans 3:21-26** – His plan. His goodness. His efforts through Christ.

- The Christian should wear that as protections. God's good works for you.
- *His Righteousness in Us – OUR FAITH*
 - **Romans 4:3-5, 9-13,16,20-22** – Our faith in Him. Our absolute belief in, faith in, love for HIM! This is where He and I are bound together – FAITH!
- *Our Righteousness for Him – GOOD WORKS*
 - **Romans 6:12-13, 16-19** – I live and act with faith and behave Righteously!
- When these three things come together, I am clothed in righteousness. I am strengthened by it. It is not just what He has done, nor how we connect through my belief, nor simply the righteous deeds I do – THEY ARE ONE! What a Defense!?

■ This is about Right or Wrong

- As we did with our previous lesson with Truth, let's broaden out a bit and catch the overall meaning of the word. Righteousness is used of God's plan and our part of faith and such for sure, but sometimes it's just kind of like "doing the right thing"
 - **Acts 10:35** – "does what is right" **24:25** – "righteousness, self control, judgment"
 - These are just about good and bad choices and making right ones.
- *"In a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God" "integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling and acting" Thayer's Lexicon*
 - So, it can look kind of simple – protect yourself with good, godly behavior.
 - Satan can't do much with that. He can push at it, but he needs us to pick the fruit.
- Yes, this brings us back to bathroom tiles – **Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23** – righteousness!

■ This is about our Righteous Warrior King

- **Isaiah 59:17** – Jesus came. He came to save, to redeem. He came to punish the enemies, to win the war. He was successful because be it salvation of the faithful or vengeance of the evil, he was clothed with Righteousness – God's plan, God's will, God's way!
- He came and did all of that and He did it the right way and it stands. I want to look to Him, draw from Him, believe in walking like Him, sometimes that will mean peace and salvation, other times war and struggle, but I Will Do It The Right Way.
- How? Well, since our attention is on Jesus, let's finish by letting His show us how!
 - **Matt. 5:6** – "hunger and thirst for righteousness" – You gotta want it... badly!
 - **Matt. 5:10** – "persecuted for the sake..." – You have to hold it against any foe!
 - **Matt. 5:20** – "surpasses that of the scribes" – It can't be superficial. Inside out!
 - **Matt. 6:1** – "before men to be noticed"- Show it in actions, but for God!
 - **Matt. 6:33** – "seek first His...righteousness" – See Point 1!!! All three elements!
 - Seek first an understanding of what He has done for you.
 - Seek first daily greater faith and trust in who He is.
 - Seek first above all other actions to do things that are right in His name.
 - And yes, fuel that fire, stoke it, grow it, through Bible Study!

Conclusion – The Father is righteous. By His grace He has sought to save you. Jesus is righteous. He valiantly stood for the Father's plan to fight for our sanctification. They only ingredient in question unto eternal salvation is.... You? Will be righteous in their name?