

Sunday School Lesson for the Month of May, 2017

The Christian's Bulletproof Vest

(Ephesians 6:14)

Sunday, May 7, 2017

Paul continues to detail the various pieces of armor we must utilize if we are to be victorious in our continuous conflict with Satan and the forces of evil. After emphasizing the belt of trust that supports, organizes, and promotes efficiency, Paul goes on to speak of the breastplate of righteousness. This particular piece of armor gave protection to the breast, the back, the neck, and the hips. It was somewhat similar to a modern vest, and it was made of small metal pieces that were woven together so as to provide protection for the vital organs of the body.

Paul admonishes Christians to put on the breastplate of righteousness. The righteousness of God is the activity of God setting things right. Through Jesus Christ, God set things right with man and between man. God's plan is that we should receive to our credit, the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith, and God makes us right with himself on the basis of our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Galatians 3:11-14).

Sunday, May 14, 2017

I. The breastplate of righteousness – not a righteousness of our own!

Paul had sought to protect himself from the accusing finger of a quietly conscience and from the weaknesses of the flesh by a righteousness based on perfect obedience to the law. While his performance might not have been perfect, it surpasses that of any of his contemporaries. Romans 7 describes the agony of his heart as he discovered that there was no real protection from sin and guilt through attempting to achieve a righteousness of his own through obedience to the law (Romans 7:21-25). Paul then proclaimed the message of grace that provided spiritual protection from the assaults of evil through a righteousness offered by God as a gift to those who put faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul was writing to those who were threatened by evil and were in danger of being defeated. He declared that they must put on this breastplate of

righteousness that comes through faith in order that they might not be destroyed by the enemy.

- They were threatened by their own weaknesses and helplessness.
- They were threatened by the strength of evil inclinations and degrading habits formed in the past.
- They were oppressed by the devil who was continually seeking to destroy them.
- They were threatened and confronted with an evil environment that was not conducive to spiritual growth.

Facing inward as well as external foes, they needed every means of support they could muster. Paul urges them to recognize that their standing before God, justified, declared righteous and acceptable, was on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ and not on the basis of their own obedience to the law.

Sunday, May 21, 2017

II. The breastplate of righteousness – “The righteousness from God that depends on Faith” (Philippians 3:9).

Paul found security in the position that was granted to him by the grace of God on the condition of his faith response to Jesus Christ. When Paul recognized that he was clothed in this perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, it served as a bulletproof vest to protect the vital organs of his spiritual nature against all assaults and accusations.

Dressed in the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, Paul was persuaded that nothing could separate him or other believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Paul responded to the certain salvation that is provided through Jesus Christ with some significant questions as he contemplated the time when we all will appear before our creator – God!

Sunday, May 28, 2017

III. The breastplate of righteousness – protection it provides.

Someone has declared that one cannot go to heaven without a perfect righteousness. In view of the fact that all people are law breakers and sinners, leaves us in a hopeless condition unless somehow we can receive righteousness

from God. To illustrate this truth, someone said, "In order to go to heaven, you must have a perfect record." We do not go to heaven on our own record. Instead, through faith in Jesus Christ, we are given his perfect record, and we go to heaven on the record of the one who lived a sinless life and died on the cross as a substitute for sinners.

The breastplate of righteousness, a Christian's bulletproof vest, will protect from the guilt, sin and the imperfection of the past. The Lord does not want us to spend the rest of our lives concerned about our failures, mistakes, and sins. He wants us to be able to face the future with joy, assurance, and confidence that our sins have been forgiven.

The breastplate of righteousness, a Christian's bulletproof vest, will protect from fear as we face the fact that one day we will meet God before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 8:1). It is through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord that we move into a position with God that removes the possibility of our being utterly condemned and rejected on the day of judgement (John 3:17-18). Instead of dreading the day when we stand before God, we can look forward to it with anticipation because of the breastplate of righteousness that comes to us through faith (John 5:24).

If we want to overcome Satan, we need to dress up in this breastplate of armor, this bulletproof vest, that will sustain us and strengthen us in our every moment of conflict with evil.