

Finishing Well

Lesson #18

Breastplate of Righteousness

May 25, 2022

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

II Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect [mature], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Eph. 6:11-13 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

The armor of God

- Enable you to stand against the devil's schemes
- Has divine power to demolish strongholds.

Three Tenses Of Salvation

Justification	I Have Been Saved from the Penalty of Sin
Sanctification	I Am Being Saved from the Power of Sin
Glorification	I Will Be Saved from the Presence of Sin

Breastplate of Righteousness

The breastplate, usually made of molded metal, was a central part of the Roman soldier's armor to provide protection for the torso, which contains vital organs like the heart, lungs and so on. When he fought in hand-to-hand combat, he used a short sword that was designed not to swing, but to thrust into the enemy's chest or abdomen. Without a breastplate, a soldier would be asking for death. Any attack could instantly become fatal.

In Hebrew thought, the heart represented the mind and will, and the bowels were the seat of the emotions. Thus, the breastplate of righteousness protects the believer's mind, will, and emotions [your soul], areas where Satan often attacks.

Prov. 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs [issues] of life.

With a sturdy breastplate, the very same attacks become ineffective and useless, as blows glance off the armor. Without righteousness, we leave ourselves open to almost certain death. With righteousness, the otherwise fatal attacks of our enemy are thwarted.

What Is Righteousness?

"Righteousness is that attribute by which God's nature is seen to be the eternally perfect standard of what is right." [D. W. Diehl, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*]

- To be righteous is to be without guilt or moral culpability before God.
- It means to conform to God's standard of holiness, to His moral commandments.
- It is to be pure, just as Jesus is pure [I John 3:3].
- Involves not just our outward behavior, but also being pure in our thoughts and attitudes.
 - Matt. 5:27-28; Mark 7:20-23; Ps. 51:6, 10, 16-17

Key Point: True and perfect righteousness is not possible for man to attain on his own. The standard is simply too high.

Truth: Sin affects us to the very core of our being.

Isa. 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags;

- Filthy rags do not make much of a breastplate.

Key Point: True righteousness is possible for mankind, but only through the cleansing of sin by Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Two Types Of Righteousness

A. Imputed Righteousness

Key Point: We need the righteousness of Christ imputed to us because we have no righteousness of our own.

Rom. 3:10-12 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Key Point: We are sinners by nature, and we cannot make ourselves righteous. We cannot place ourselves in right standing with God.

Rom. 3:19 Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before God.

Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

- If you are depending on your own righteousness to protect you, you are defenseless against Satan.

Calvin: We shall never be clothed with the righteousness of Christ except we first know assuredly that we have no righteousness of our own.

Truth: We need an imputed righteousness.

II Cor. 5:21 For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus, His Son] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Rom. 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Rom. 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Imputed Righteousness: The giving of Christ's righteousness to sinners who repent and accept God's free gift of Christ's righteousness accredited to them through Christ's death on the cross where He paid the penalty for their sins.

Rom. 4:4-5 Now to the one who works, the wages are not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.

- This is a one-time event in your life and NEVER changes, even though you continue to "sin" after you become a "born again" Christian.
- Guaranteed an entrance to heaven on the basis of what Christ has already done.
- Once you become a child of God, the penalty for your sins [past, present, & future] are paid for. You are righteous in God's eyes for the purpose of receiving eternal life.
- Free gift I receive when I put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ & His finished work on the cross.
- He is the righteous and Holy One who imputes His righteousness and His holiness to me.
- However, my character, actions and deeds do not necessarily change yet.

Satan causes us to focus on our sinful behavior.

"Look at how you just exploded in anger! Look at how you lied to cover your tracks!

Look at how you lusted after that girl! Some Christian you are!"

- How do you answer him if his charges are true?

You answer by applying Christ's imputed righteousness: "You are right, I did just sin.

But my eternal life does not depend on my sinless behavior or perfect track record.

I am trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ and His righteousness credited to my account.

Take it up with Him!" [Zech. 3:1-5; Rev. 12:10-11].

Key Point: To stand firm against the enemy, put on the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Eph. 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. [New man God has created when He saved us.]

- Garment of Justification > my hope and assurance of eternal life

Righteous and justify are from the same root. God declares as justified forever the one whom He sees in Christ. Justification is not a feeling. It is a certain fact for the mind of God.

Fact: I have been set apart and made holy unto God. ONE time event; never changes
However, in real life experience, nothing has really changed.

To Stand Firm Against The Enemy, Put On The Imparted Righteousness Of An Obedient Life.

B. Imparted Righteousness

Paul has explained in Eph. 4:24, the new man was "created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." I am now a new self, new creation, new man in Christ, new nature. I am under grace, not under condemnation. I have eternal life as a child of God and I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Once I am justified, God begins the long process of sanctification where He must literally make me righteous, holy and set apart in character, action and deed.

- I am emptied of self and filled with the life of Jesus Christ.
- It is an inward change brought about apart from my natural strength.

As new creatures in Christ, we are to "walk as children of Light" in this world. As new creatures in Christ, we are to grow in conformity to God's holy standards as revealed in His Word.

- A life-long process [sanctification] of learning how to live in your earthly "body of sin", through the power of the Holy Spirit living in you.
- Changes our nature even as we live in a body of flesh.
- As you "walk in the Spirit," Christ's righteousness is imparted to you.

II Cor. 3:18 But we all, with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed [being transformed] into the same image from glory to glory, which comes by the Spirit of the Lord.

- You are taught how to live righteously through the power of the Holy Spirit in you!

Initial Salvation Justification Imputed Righteousness If we LIVE by the Spirit
 Ongoing Salvation Sanctification Imparted Righteousness Let us WALK by the Spirit

Sanctification: Strong's #38 = hagiasmos = the process by which God conforms us back into His image > the image that was lost when Adam & Eve sinned [Rom. 8:29; imparted righteous]

- This process purifies me, separates me from the power of sin, and consecrates me to God. My soul is being saved.

Sanctification > Imparted Righteousness = My soul [mind, will & emotions] is being saved.

God's Grace Enables The Spirit To Work In You

Gal. 5:15-18 Yield To The Spirit Step By Step
 Gal. 5:19-21 The Spirit delivers you from the works of the flesh
 Gal. 5:22-24 The Holy Spirit produces the character of Christ in you.
 Gal. 5:25-26 Maintain your walk in the Spirit

- Fruit takes time, but there should be evident progress in holiness and obedience
- If there is a gap between our profession of Christ and our practice, the enemy will use it to attack us.

Consider: Some justified believers are quick to allow God to sanctify them and the change is noticeable.

- Some justified believers take a lifetime.
- Some are not obedient and do not yield to sanctification.

Justification

Sanctification

Legal Standing; Declared Righteous	Moral: Internal Condition; Made Righteous
Instantaneous; 1 time event	Continuous; life-long pursuit
Imputed Righteousness; God's Work My standing before God	Imparted Righteousness - I cooperate My Christian Walk
Indicative Mood; I am justified Same for all believers	Imperative Mood; I act like it Greater in some believers than others
Union With Christ in His death & resurrection	Communion with Christ in the present

2 Different Garments in Scripture: Garment = a symbol of righteousness

1. Garment of Justification [Outward Garment] > Imputed Righteousness

- Garment in which believers are said to be clothed as a result of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

II Cor. 5:21 we are made "the righteousness of God in Him." This one-time event can never change, for it rests on the work of Christ and the value of His shed blood before God.

The blessings of the born-again believer during the Church Age: Imputed Righteousness:

- Forgiveness, redemption, regeneration, eternal life, and the divine nature are all the initial portions when we are justified. Garment of Justification

God's will: I now show by my actions [Spirit led] that I am the new creation in Christ and that He does live in me. This demonstrates that I have applied the blood to the doorposts of my heart and I am in the "process of expelling the leaven [sin in my life]."

Truth: NOW, I am to mature and allow the Holy Spirit & the Word of God to transform me into the image of Jesus Christ. I am to run the race and reach the goal.

2. Garment of Sanctification > Imparted [Inward] Righteousness

- Garment for Bridal Preparation Of Fine Linen For Reward

Scripture repeatedly commands us to walk worthy.

Eph. 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

- Walk refers to our conduct Worthy has the idea of "matching up."
- Our actions should match our words.
- Our outward presentation should match our inward convictions.
- To "walk worthy" of our calling means to live up to that calling, to live in such a way as to honor God as we complete His course of action for us.

God's original purpose for man: Man was created in the image and likeness of God so he might co-reign with Christ over the earth. [Gen.1:26-28]

- That purpose is still forthcoming in Christ's Millennial Kingdom

In Col. 1:10-12 walking worthy is tied to 4 personal characteristics:

- 1) That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work,
- 2) steadily increasing in the knowledge of God
- 3) using the power and might of God to joyfully endure and patiently persevere
- 4) giving thanks to the Father who has made us fit [qualified, meet] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

I Thess. 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.

Sanctification is the means God uses to set us apart and to make us holy, prepared and fit for the coming kingdom. [John 17:19]

Walking in a manner that is worthy of God is perhaps the highest calling to which those who have tasted of His gracious salvation can ascend. We have not only received forgiveness of sin and life everlasting through faith in Him but have been called to be partakers of God's heavenly kingdom and receive a share in His own glory - as heirs of God and joint-heir with Christ!
Col. 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Scripture speaks of a garment which we make for ourselves.

Rev. 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her [Bride of Christ] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white:

for the fine linen is the Righteousness Of Saints.

Key Point: It is not a question of the righteousness of God in Christ, but rather the "righteousness of the saints."

- Refers to Spirit-led deeds that are performed after we are born again.
- Works of godliness and deeds of righteousness that the Holy Spirit produces through us.
- These good works are why we were created in Christ. [Eph. 2:10]
- They are called "fruits of righteousness." [Phil. 1:11]

Consider: God wants me conformed to His image so He can produce the "fruit" that will make me fit or prepared to rule and reign in His Millennial Kingdom for 1000 years on earth.

- The measure of my usefulness to the Lord in His future kingdom will be found in the measure of my sanctification here and now.

Consider: Sanctification is what the Lord will judge us on at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- Am I clothed with the garment of "fine linen?" Revealed at Judgment Seat

II Cor. 5:9-10 Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

I Cor. 3:10c-15 But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

When it is a question of our fitness to be in the Father's house, the garment needed is the "imputed garment", supplied by our Lord as the result of His work on Calvary's cross.

When it is the display of the beauty of the bride at the marriage of the Lamb, we have the privilege of making a garment that is "bright and pure," to meet the eye of our Bridegroom.

The only time I have to stitch that "wedding dress" is while I am on the earth. It will be the result of what has transpired at the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers, when all that is not for Christ will have been burned up. Then only that which is "bright and pure" will remain.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Christ's Warning To The Church At Sardis

Rev. 3:2-5a Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect [in the Spirit, mature] before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments;

Question: Can a justified believer defile his imputed, justified garment?

Can a justified believer defile his imparted, sanctification garment?

and They Shall Walk With Me In White: For They Are Worthy. [walk matches who you are]

⁵ He That Overcomes, The Same Shall Be Clothed In White Raiment;

- To be "clothed in white garments" in this promise will be a prize to the overcomers in the Millennial Kingdom.
- How they have been walking in the Church Age, will be a prize to them in the coming age.
- Obedient overcomers will possess this garment of sanctification.

My Belief: Sanctification is our bridal preparation.

- Sanctification will allow me to be presented to Christ as a pure virgin and to inherit the kingdom with all its rewards.
- Sanctification is a life-long process by which I become an overcomer who will inherit the Millennial Kingdom with Jesus Christ.

Consider: When I have cooperated with the Holy Spirit, I will have a proper sanctification garment, be well-pleasing to the Lord and receive the prize or reward.

- However, many born-again believers, after receiving His forgiveness, redemption, eternal life, divine nature, etc., will not cooperate with His grace and go on with Him.
- Hence, they are unable to be brought to maturity during the Church Age and thus will not be ready at the Lord's coming back to enter into the Millennial Kingdom and share in the divine blessings of the Kingdom Age as a prize.

God Has Divine Promises & Rewards As An Incentive To Be An Overcomer.

II Pet. 1:3 According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,

Consider: If I cooperate with God's supplying grace and power, He will do the work of maturity in me. Then He will reward me at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

My prize is an entrance into the Millennial Kingdom and divine blessings during His Kingdom such as:

- the joy and rest of the Lord.

Matt. 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. [Matt. 25:23; Heb. 4:9-11]

- and the reign over the nations.

Rev. 2:26-27 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: ²⁷ And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. [Rev. 20:4, 6]

Phil. 2:12-13 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Phil. 3:10-14 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Eph. 1:17-19 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Eph. 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

I need imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness.

The process of sanctification is preparing my bridal garment.

Am I allowing the Holy Spirit to prepare me and qualify me to serve in Christ's Millennial Kingdom?