

EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –  
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE  
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –  
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare**

**TITLE: Program 62 – To Overcome Fear Put On The Breastplate Of  
Righteousness**

**TUESDAY**

**OPEN**

Are you much afraid my friend? Do you tremble? Do you fear for your life? Do you fear for your job? Do you fear that you’re not going to be everything that you should be? O Beloved, listen to me, God has not given you a spirit of fear. He’s given you power and love and a sound mind. And if you want to make it in spiritual warfare you’ve got to know that you cannot stand in fear. Instead you stand in the peace of God. We’ll talk about it today.

**PART ONE**

Fear has always been a tactic in warfare. The enemy wants to terrorize you. And God tells us in 1 Peter that “...[Our] **adversary, the devil** [goes] **around like a roaring lion, seeking** [whom he may] **devour.** (1 Peter 5:8b) You know if you’re in the jungle or if you’re wherever a lion is and the lion

is silent you don't know that he's there. But if all of a sudden you're walking along and you hear this awful roar then you are filled with fear. The devil was there all along. The lion was there all along, but maybe you didn't know it until he roared. And then when the roar happened it accomplished the purpose, it just absolutely froze you in terror. We're going to talk about fear. We're going to talk about the answer to fear. We're going to talk about warfare as we continue looking at the armor of God. God has let us know through Paul as he writes and brings to a close his letter to the Ephesians that we are in a warfare and that you and I need to know how to stand in these evil days, how to resist the enemy. And he tells us that we are to **“Stand... having girded [our] loins with truth...,”** we've already looked at that, **“...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod [our] feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace....”** (Ephesians 6:14-15) Now I want us to go to the second piece of the armor that he points out that you and I are to already have put on and that is **“...the breastplate of righteousness....”** (6:14b) Now the breastplate was what protected the vital organs. Remember they were in warfare with spears. They were in warfare with swords. And so they were going to come at the man's head or they were going to come at the man's chest. Why? Because that's where the heart is. That's where the liver is. That's where the lungs are. That's where the pancreas is. And if they can get to that man and get him in his vulnerable anatomy then he can bring him down. Then they can defeat him. So it's absolutely vital that in warfare you put on the breastplate of righteousness. First of all I want to take us to Ephesians chapter 6 because I want you to have your Bible open. After all, “Precepts for Life” is about you and I discovering truth for ourselves by learning to study the Bible inductively. Inductively means we go to the text itself. We observe it to discover what does it say? We understand then how to interpret it. What does it mean? And then how to apply it. Well he tells us in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 14, **“Stand firm therefore...,”** since you're in a warfare, since you've got an

enemy, “**Stand firm therefore, having...**” And remember we looked at the word “having”. He uses it three times here. “**...Having girded your loins with truth...having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace....**” (Ephesians 6:14-15) Now let’s go first of all to the “breastplate of righteousness”. You and I need to understand that when we came to know Jesus Christ that day, that moment when you believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God you received the righteousness of God. You were a sinner. You owed God righteousness. And what God did was He took your sin, and because Jesus paid for it in full, God credited your account with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I’ll never forget when I went down on my knees on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1963. I knew that I was a sinner because just before I came to know the Lord I started thinking what if I was to stand before a holy God? I didn’t believe in a literal heaven or a literal hell because I hadn’t been taught about one. Although I had been raised in the church I wasn’t raised in a church that put an emphasis on the Word of God. It was on ritual rather than the Word. And so I had a religion but I didn’t have a relationship. The Word of God was read but it wasn’t expounded. It wasn’t explained. I wasn’t taught how to study. It was just part, you would read the epistles over here. You’d read the Old Testament there and you went through the ritual and I was a young girl looking around to see how many new boys there were in church or if could catch the eye of someone that I admired and I was in hot pursuit of. So anyway I was sitting there and I was thinking, God, someday I’m going to stand before You. And that’s all I understood was I’m going to stand before God. That was the Spirit of God convicting me and bringing me to my own sense of sin. And I thought if I stand before God, He’s going to look at me and He’s going to say “Depart from Me.” And that’s all I knew was that I was not clean enough. I was not righteous enough. So this is what I did. I decided that I would get my act together and that I would quit being immoral, that I would quit living the way that I lived

and that I would be everything that I should be. But as it says in Romans 7, [“The good that I wanted to do I couldn’t do and the evil that I didn’t want to do I did.”] (PARAPHRASE, Romans 7:19) Then Paul says, **“O wretched man that I am! Who [will] deliver me from [this] body of...death, [this body that continues to sin]?”(Romans 7:24, KJV)** And then it says at the end of Romans chapter 7, **“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!...”(Romans 7:25a)** So that day when I went to my bedroom and when I fell on my knees beside the bed and I cried out to God I didn’t know the transaction that took place. I didn’t know that when Jesus Christ hung on the cross as 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that [“God made Him to be sin for us, that we might have His righteousness.”] (PARAPHRASE, 2 Corinthians 5:21) And I didn’t know that at that moment when I was down there on my knees that God was crediting to my account in heaven the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but He was also imparting to me righteousness. Now how does He impart righteousness to us? What is it that makes the difference? Well when you move into Romans 8 you see it’s [“the Spirit of God that is given to you.”] (PARAPHRASE, Romans 8:11) In Ephesians chapter 1 remember it says [“Having heard the message of your salvation, having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit who is a guarantee of the redemption of this purchased possession.”] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 1:13-14) At that moment on my knees God gave me the righteousness of Christ. He gave me the Holy Spirit who not only am I declared righteous, but I am enabled to live righteously. Let’s look at it for just one quick minute and it’s going to be a quick minute because I want us to get on to the “gospel of peace” and I want us to get on the subject of fear. But I would like you to go to Romans chapter 8. It says in verse 3, **“For what the Law could not do....” (Romans 8:3a)** The Law could tell you to be righteous, but the Law could not make you righteous. I knew the Law. I knew the Ten Commandments, but I didn’t how to keep them. I was unable to be obedient all the time. So it says, **“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was**

through the flesh...,” because my flesh was sinful. It says, “...**God did: sending His ... Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...**” as a human being He became flesh and blood, “...**and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.**” (Romans 8:3) In other words sin was taken care of. It was condemned. It was dealt with. And then he goes on to say, “**So that ...**,” and this is what’s so beautiful Beloved, “**So that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us....**” (8:4a) And the requirement of the Law is righteousness. What is righteousness? Righteousness is doing what God says is right. It says, “**So that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**” (8:4) And then he goes on to say this, “...**those who are [in] the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, [on] the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.**” (8:5-6) So when he’s talking about you and I having on the breastplate of righteousness, first of all you and I have to understand that we have been declared righteous by God, that “...**there is ... no condemnation [to] those who are in Christ Jesus.**” (Romans 8:1) And there’s no condemnation so God’s never going to look at you and say you’re going to go to hell. And He’s not going to look at you and say that because God’s righteousness, [“the righteousness of Jesus Christ was imputed;”] this is Romans chapter 4, [“was imputed to your account. It was registered on the credit side of the ledger. It was reckoned to you as righteousness.”] (PARAPHRASE, Romans 4, verses 5 & 24) So when I stand against the enemy, the way the enemy defeats a Christian is through sin. You see if he can get me to sin and I don’t understand that I have on the breastplate of righteousness and I don’t understand that then I think okay, I sinned; now I’m outside the family of God. And God is saying, no, that’s not true. He tells us in 1 John 1:9, “**If [I] confess my [sin]....**,” if I name it for what it is, “...**He, [God] is faithful and [just] to forgive [my sin]...**” and listen carefully, “...**and to cleanse [me]...**” to wash me

**“...from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)** So if you and I are going to have confidence in warfare then you and I have to know that our sin has been taken care of, that God has covered our sin past, present and future through the blood of Jesus Christ. You say, okay, that takes care of my sin, but I still feel condemned and I still feel in trouble. We’ll talk about it when I come back.

## **PART TWO**

The book of Revelation tells us that [“Satan is an accuser of the brethren, that he accuses us day and night before the throne.”] (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 12:10) And that’s why it’s so important that you and I have put on the breastplate of righteousness, because his accusations are to fall to the ground. They are to have no quarter. They are to have no import. Now how do we keep that so it’s that way? Well that means that not only do I have righteousness put to my account, credited to my account, but I am to live righteously. If you want victory in warfare, if you want to be able to stand firm, as he tells us three times in Ephesians chapter 6 in this subject of warfare, if you and I want to hold our position we’ve got to know, listen I have been positioned in righteousness because [“I have been given the righteousness of Jesus Christ”] (PARAPHRASE, 2 Corinthians 5:21) according to 2 Corinthians 5:21, but I am to live righteously. And you see when you and I do not live righteously then we’re in trouble and we are going to lose, not the war, but we’re going to lose the battle. Let me show it to you because it’s very important. It will help you understand a passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Now what’s happening in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 is this young man who is supposedly a believer has been having relations with his father’s wife. Now whether that’s his mother or and this did go on. If you’ve studied anything about the Roman Empire you know that this happened, but it was a rarity. Now this could have been his father’s second

wife or this could have been his mother. At any rate Paul is very upset with the church. And he’s upset because they have not dealt with this sin. They’ve covered it up and that’s what a lot of people do. They cover up sin. The minute you cover up sin you’re vulnerable in warfare. You’re not going to be able to stand. Why? Because sin belongs in the enemy’s camp and righteousness belongs in God’s camp. Disobedience is in the enemy’s camp. Obedience is in God’s camp. So in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 he’s talking about this young man and he says in verse 5, **“I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh...that his spirit may be saved in the day of [Jesus Christ].” (1 Corinthians 5:5)** In other words he’s saying, look, I’m going to withdraw my prayer support. I’m going to let this young man go. We’re going to put him out of the assembly. I’m going to let him go and I’m going to let him reap the harvest of that sin so that he will turn around and say I have sinned and he will come out from the snare of the devil. What I want you to see is sin gives the enemy power over you. And that’s why Beloved, you must put on the breastplate of righteousness. Now remember Satan is an accuser. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and this is a church that had a lot of problems and so we deal with a lot of things. But in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 Paul says in verse 3, **“But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.” (1 Corinthians 4:3)** Now what had happened in Corinth is they were sitting in judgment on Paul and they were condemning him. And they were lying against him and they were accusing him and this was warfare. And so this is what he says, [“You’re judging me, but I don’t even examine myself. I don’t even say, ‘O, I’m sterling in this behavior.’”] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 4:3) He says, **“For I am conscious...,”** and this is the key, **“...of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.” (4:4)** He says [“Look, as far as I know I’ve got on the breastplate of righteousness. As far as I know there is nothing in my life that I have not brought to the

plumb line of God’s Word and am living accordingly. I am living righteously. And yet, that doesn’t mean you know that I don’t have a blind spot, but I know that God is going to examine me.”] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 4:3-4) So if you’re going to stand in warfare, what’s he saying? He’s saying two things. Number one: remember, you have Christ’s righteousness put to your account. You will never come under condemnation so don’t let the enemy threaten you in that way. Don’t let the enemy say to you, “O, you’re going to lose your salvation. O, you’re going to go to hell. O, you’re going to burn.” Because then you are so pulverized with fear you can’t do anything. The second thing is keep short accounts with God. Keep short accounts with others. When you sin confess it. When you sin confess it and forsake it. Do it immediately. Make it right with everyone then you’ve got on the breastplate of righteousness. So when the enemy comes against you to take you in that breastplate will protect you from the enemy’s attack. Now the next thing he says, you have put on the belt of truth, you have put on the breastplate of righteousness. Now he’s saying “**...shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.**” (Ephesians 6:15) Those shoes that they wore into battle have like metal cleats in the bottom. And those metal cleats kept them from slipping and sliding and enabled them to stand firm. So what is he saying? He’s saying listen, in warfare you have to know and understand that you’re at peace with all these men around you. Do you remember when Caesar was killed? Have you ever seen or studied about Caesar’s life and when they’re stabbing him and he looks at Brutus and he says, “Et tu Brute?” You too, are my enemy? So one of the things that you have to know in warfare is you have to know that you are at peace with God and that you are at peace with every fellow man in the body of Jesus Christ. The world’s going to hate you as we saw but you are to be at peace with everyone around you and this gives you the ability to stand. Now what does the enemy do? He wants to strike fear in your heart. If you ever listen to National Geographic and the series that they did on Alexander the Great

they will tell you that this young general in his twenties knew his greatest weapon in warfare was fear. And so when his armies came out, and they came out in these phalanxes and they had their shields about them and they had their spears and they had their scabbard and their armor and they were standing there in their breastplate and their helmet that they had on their head to protect them, what they would do is they would rattle those shields and hit them with the spears and they would make this blood curdling noise and it was like a tank that was coming at them. And when that tank was coming at them with all this noise and clamor and yelling and screaming and these ungodly sounds coming out it struck fear in the enemy. Listen, Satan is going around like a roaring lion. He wants you to fear and you need to memorize 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7, “...**God has not given us a spirit of [fear], but...**[He’s given us] **power...**[He’s given us] **love....**” (2 Timothy 1:7a) He has given us a sound mind, a mind under control, not one fearful, not one panicked, not one not knowing where to go. O Beloved, be not afraid, because if you have on the belt of truth, if you have on the breastplate of righteousness, then you having shod your feet are in good standing with God. You’re at peace with God and you can stand.