

Righteousness & peace

The breastplate and the shoes — follow along and put on the armor

Before you begin

Paul wrote to a city steeped in idol worship — Ephesus was home to the temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and a riot once broke out there over Paul's preaching against idols (Acts 19:23-41).

Isaiah 59:17 *"He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head."*

Paul wrote to people surrounded by false gods and false security. What "idols" or false securities compete for your worship today?

Part one: the breastplate of righteousness

The breastplate covers vital organs, especially the heart — a soldier's most essential protective gear. Look up each verse, jot down what stands out, then respond in the blank.

1 Guard your heart *Ephesians 6:14 · Proverbs 4:23*

Stand firm, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place. Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

What is currently guarding — or unguarding — your heart?

2 Two kinds of righteousness *2 Corinthians 5:21*

Paul is pointing to two things:

- Imputed righteousness — what happens at salvation. God no longer sees our sin, but Jesus' holiness covering us.
- Imparted righteousness — as we walk in righteousness, our lives are no longer marked by sin, and the enemy loses his ability to accuse us.

Which of these do you tend to lean on — or forget? Do you rest in being covered, or strive to earn it?

3 Ask for a hunger for righteousness *Romans 7:18-19 · Matthew 5:6 · Matthew 6:33*

"Being good" in our own strength doesn't go well — even Paul struggled with this. But it's a promise: those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied. If you don't hunger for it, you can ask Him to change your appetite.

Where are you trying to "be good" in your own strength instead of asking Him to change your appetite?

My prayer:

4 Guard against self-righteousness *Romans 3:10, 23 · Isaiah 64:6*

None of our works earns us anything — it's Christ's finished work expressed through us. None is righteous; all our righteous deeds, apart from Him, are like a polluted garment.

Is there an area where you've been quietly proud of your own "goodness" rather than grateful for His covering?

Part two: the shoes of peace

Shoes for your feet — the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. This piece is both defensive, protecting our inner stability, and offensive, equipping us to advance God's kingdom through peacemaking.

5 Accept the gospel of peace *Ephesians 6:15 · Acts 10:36 · Colossians 1:21-22*

Before Christ, we were enemies of God, separated by our own evil thoughts and actions. Now, through Jesus, we have peace with God — reconciled, holy, and blameless as we stand before Him.

Do you live like someone who is truly at peace with God — or still trying to earn your way back into right standing?

My response:

6 Stay ready *1 Thessalonians 5:6*

Let us not sleep in spiritual indifference, but keep wide awake, alert, and sober-minded. We're soldiers — even in seasons of peace, there is training and readiness.

Where do you need to trade complacency for alertness this week?

7 Walk in peace *Proverbs 3:5-6 · Romans 15:13*

Walking in peace means choosing to stay calm regardless of unexpected circumstances, trusting Him instead of leaning on your own understanding — so storms become a reminder to re-align rather than a reason to panic.

What storm are you currently facing where you need to choose peace over panic?

8 Make peace *Matthew 5:9*

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Because we carry true peace, we're called to bring it with us wherever we go — shifting the atmosphere for others through Spirit-inspired words.

Who in your life needs you to bring peace into their situation this week?

Closing reflection

Romans 15:13 *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

Ask the Lord this week to teach you how to WALK in the shoes of peace — to rest secure in your salvation, and to show you where the breastplate of righteousness needs to be put on. Write your prayer below.