

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 35

Introduction: The last time we were together in Ephesians we were looking at the Armour of God that has been provided for the believer.

Notice Ephesians 6:10-17

Satan has launched his attack upon the body of Jesus Christ. We must keep in mind that God has commissioned us to go into all the world and share the Gospel. Satan's goal is to somehow and in some way to stop us from conducting that commission.

Colossians 1:12-14

¹² *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

¹³ **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:**

¹⁴ *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

I show you this to help you to understand that we are called to declare the Gospel so that people can be rescued from the POWER OF DARKNESS. Satan will do all he can to keep us from reaching the lost. This is what the battle is all about.

God has therefore provided us with the armour to be able to stand in the heat of the battle as Satan shoots his fiery darts to cause fear, discouragement, deception, or to distract. Because many believers have not understood the armour Satan has succeeded in hindering many Christians. Many have become caught up and entangled in the world by living for the pleasures that are here.

2 Timothy 2:3-4

³ *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

⁴ **No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life;** that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Today we are going to pick up where we stopped, and we are going to look at the subject of prayer in verses 18-20. These verses are not to be separated from the armour of God

because the prayer spoken of here is meant to be essential in the battle. Let us notice how others relied upon prayer in the midst of the battle.

➤ **David**

Psalm 61:1-3

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

² *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

³ *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*

David prayed as he was under the attack of his own son.

➤ **Jesus**

Matthew 26:39, 42-44

³⁹ *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

⁴² *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*

⁴³ *And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.*

⁴⁴ *And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

Jesus prayed as He found Himself in a very heated battle. Satan was trying to pull Him from the will of God.

In the verses before us we see several points about prayer. First, we see;

I. When we are to Pray

Notice Ephesians 6:18

We are to ALWAYS be praying. This does not mean that we are to be praying 24 hours a day for that is not possible. Let us keep in mind in the context before us Paul is speaking of the spiritual battle. The idea here is that we are to have a consistent prayer life and

when we are in the heat of the battle, we are to take every situation to God. Notice that Paul says with all PRAYER and SUPPLICATION. What is the difference?

Prayer is communion with God. This would be a prayer of adoration, devotion, and worship. **Supplications** are the requests presented to God. Let me show you a pattern for prayer given by Jesus to His disciples.

Luke 11:1

*And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, **Lord, teach us to pray**, as John also taught his disciples.*

Matthew 6:7-15

⁷ *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

⁸ *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

⁹ *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

¹⁰ *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

¹⁴ *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

¹⁵ *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

We are to pray always with ALL prayer and supplication. Listen to what one writer recorded:

"The idea is all kinds of prayer or prayer upon prayer. We should use every kind of prayer we can think of. Group prayer, individual prayer, silent prayer, shouting prayer, walking

prayer, kneeling prayer, eloquent prayer, groaning prayer, constant prayer, fervent prayer - just pray."

When we are in the midst of the battle, we are to use every kind of prayer we can because prayer unleashes the power of God.

James 5:16-18

¹⁶ Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

¹⁷ Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Listen to the words of Barnes:

"It would be well for the soldier who goes forth to battle to pray--to pray for victory; or to pray that he may be prepared for death, should he fall. But soldiers do not often feel the necessity of this. To the Christian soldier, however, it is indispensable. Prayer crowns all lawful efforts with success, and gives a victory when nothing else would. No matter how complete the armour; no matter how skilled we maybe in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph. This prayer is not to be intermitted. It is to be always. In every temptation and spiritual conflict we are to pray."

Paul next show us:

II. How we are to Pray

Notice Ephesians 6:18 again.

We see here that we are to pray **IN THE SPIRIT**. Let us understand that prayer is not me trying to convince God to align His will with mine, but prayer is me aligning my will with God's will. Why is it so important to pray IN THE SPIRIT?

1. He will lead us to pray in the will of God.

1 John 5:14-15

¹⁴ *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

¹⁵ *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

Praying in the Spirit is also prayer that is initiated by the Holy Spirit. It is prayer that is influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Examples:

It can happen while talking on the phone with someone and they are in the midst of the battle and right then the Holy Spirit moves you to pray for their situation. It can be in a parking lot at Wal-Mart or on the bleachers at a football game. We must be on alert for the leading of the Spirit in such situations. How often do you find yourself led by the Spirit to pray for and with a fellow believer who is in the battle?

The believer who is in a state of resisting, grieving, quenching or lying to the Holy Spirit, should not be surprised that he or she is seldom moved to pray at moment's notice. But if you are filled with the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, you will be in a sensitive state, and when the Spirit moves you to pray, you immediately know what you need to do.

2. He will pray for us when we don't know what to pray for.

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

²⁷ *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

3. He will bring to our minds verses which we can use in prayer.

John 14:26

²⁶ *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Next Paul shows us who we are to pray for:

III. We are to pray for ALL believers.

Notice Ephesians 6:18 again.

Here we see that we are to pray for ALL SAINTS. This statement presupposes that we will be close with our fellow believers, and we will be aware of their needs as they face the spiritual battle. If we have no fellowship with those of the body of Jesus Christ, then we will not know how to pray for them.

We do not just pray for believers, but the Bible commands us to pray for all people.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

² *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

³ *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

⁴ *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

IV. How we are to Pray

Notice Ephesians 6:19-20

Paul asked this church to pray for him to have boldness to share the Gospel. This is an example for us in these two verses. Paul is in prison, and he is in chains, but he does not ask these believers to pray for deliverance from the prison. Why not? Paul understood that he was exactly where God desired for him to be. He had been placed in prison in order to be a light to those on the inside. Let us look at some other verses that connect with this.

Philippians 1:13, 20-21

¹³ *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;*

²⁰ *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

²¹ *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Let us notice yet one more passage.

Acts 4:29-30

²⁹ *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,*

³⁰ *By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.*

Conclusion:

Pray is vitally important in the spiritual battle. I suppose the first thing we need to pray for is that we would accept the place where God has us. Then pray for boldness to share the Gospel to those He has brought into our lives. We must pray in the Spirit, and we must pray for each other because who are saved are all soldiers together striving to pull the unsaved from the darkness of Satan influence.