**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Spiritual Warfare: Power in Prayer**

**Ephesians 6:18-20**

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 We are in our last two weeks of our series in Ephesians, Brought to Life; Brought Together, looking at the spiritual battle we face in Ephesians 6:10-20. In these verses, Paul concludes his letter by calling us to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. We do this by putting on God’s armor, standing against or resisting temptation. Overcoming Satan, sin, and temptation cannot be achieved in your own strength but by looking to Christ for strength. It is for this reason Paul turns to prayer. Turn to Ephesians 6:18-20 as we look at what Paul’s says about prayer. My big idea is, prayer is the power behind God’s armor.

**The Fight for Glory**

 Like all of life, our fight against Satan, sin and temptation has the purpose to glorify Christ. We glorify Christ when, in the face of temptation, we fight to find joy and satisfaction in Christ rather than finding joy and satisfaction in sin. When we rely on Christ to defeat sin and temptation, he gets the glory as our all sufficient Savior, our conquering King, and our mighty merciful Lord! In the Old Testament, when Israel went to war trusting God, they defeated their enemies. But when they went to war relying on their own strength or earthly allies, they lost. They lost because they did not trust in the Divine Warrior who committed himself to defeating their enemies (Ex 14:13-14). Unless you rely on Christ, the armor is useless to you. This is why Paul turns to prayer. Prayer is the power behind the armor; it is what make the armor effective in our fight. So, one reason we still fight Satan and sin is to glorify the superior joy, satisfaction, sufficiency, and power of Christ in our lives. Let’s look more specifically at prayer as the power behind God’s armor.

**The Power Behind the Armor**

 Paul instructs us to stand against Satan, resisting temptation by prayerfully depending on Christ. Prayer displays Christ’s sufficiency for you in the face of temptation because you recognize that you cannot stand against Satan in your own strength. Prayer displays Christ as the all-powerful, Satan conquering Warrior King who fights for you (Ex 15:3). Prayer is the means by which we are strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might (10) to overcome temptation. So for example, concerning the belt of truth, pray for grace to rely on the truth in the face of temptation; concerning the breastplate of righteousness, pray that God deliver you from evil in the face of temptation; concerning the gospel shoes, pray for boldness to share the gospel; concerning the shield of faith, pray for strength to trust Christ when the arrows come; concerning the helmet of salvation, pray that you rest secure in the work of Christ when Satan’s lies bombard you; and finally, concerning the sword of the Spirt, prayerfully you use God’s word to cut off Satan’s lies that entice you. So, we have looked at the fight to glorify Christ, we have looked at the power behind the armor, now let’s look at how Paul tells us to pray for power.

**The Prayer for Power**

 Paul gives us five ways how to pray that empower the armor so we can stand against Satan and overcome temptation. The first way is to *pray always*. We see this in the phrase, praying at all times (18). Prayer is like breathing. Cut off breathing you die and cut off prayer you lose spiritual life and power. He is not talking about praying 24 hours a day but praying in the midst of life for everything you face - temptations, weaknesses, brokenness because God. The first way Paul tells us how pray is to pray always.

 The second way Paul tells us how to pray is Spirit led prayer. I get this from the phrase, praying in the Spirit (18), which refers to a sensitivity to the Spirit in our prayers. Spirit led prayer comes from a Scripture fed life. As the Spirit inspired word shapes our minds and hearts, we become more sensitive to the Spirit. Nothing is more necessary to being Spirit led than being Scripture fed. I think there would be a mass revival if Christians were more devoted to Scripture than social media. The second way Paul tells us how to pray is Spirit led prayer.

 The third way we are told how to pray is to pray about everything. I get this from the phrase, praying with all prayer and supplication (18). Pray about everything. Pray for your lost keys and your daily schedule; pray for your friends and family; pray for your disappointments and your frustrations, etc. Nothing is too small or large to pray about! God is with you, he knows all things and he is your Father who loves to display his power and wisdom in your life so why would you ignore asking for help to lift boulders! The third way Paul tells us how to pray is, pray about everything.

 The next way we are told how to pray is, pray without giving up. We see this in the phrase, to that end (praying) keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication. Keep alert means to be watchful, spiritually alert to what is going on and taking it to prayer (1 Pet 4:7; Mk 14:38). Spiritual alertness is also Scripture fed. Feeding yourself with Scripture leads to you being spiritually minded, sober minded about life. Spiritual alertness is further described as with all perseverance, making supplication. Don’t give up easily or too quickly in prayer. Perseverance means to keep pressing on when God promises or gives you conviction about it. The fourth Paul tells us who to pray is to pray without giving up.

 The final Paul tells us how to pray is to pray for your spiritual family. We see this in the phrase, making supplication for *all* the saints (18). Saints refers to the church family. Praying for all the saints includes, praying specifically for church leadership (19-20). Paul asks for prayer, especially for himself, which he does elsewhere (Rom 15:30-32; Col 4:3). Notice his greatest concern is not for personal comfort but for the gospel. He is less concerned about his personal comfort than he is about the eternal comfort of others. He asks to be filled with the Spirit, that God give him both freedom and boldness as he preaches the gospel. Paul is in prison for preaching yet he asks them to pray for boldness to preach! It should encourage us that even Paul asked for boldness to share the gospel. So, pray for our church family, for our leadership, and that the gospel would spread in Homer and around the world.

 Prayer is asking your Father for help lift the boulders in your life. Prayer is the power behind God’s armor so you can stand against Satan and sin, and overcome temptation, the spiritual boulders in your life.

**Response:**

* How is God speaking to you?
* Is your life characterized by prayer?
* What are the spiritual boulders in your life?

**Life Group Questions:**

1. What does it mean to be strong in the Lord and to stand strong?
2. How do we glorify God in all of life? In overcoming temptation?
3. Why does Paul add prayer at the end of the list of armor?
4. Can you remember any of the four different ways Paul tells us how to pray?
5. Which way speaks to you most?
6. What is your greatest struggle in prayer?
7. How is God speaking to you in this message?
8. How are you to respond in obeying God?
9. How does this passage relate to you own discipleship?
10. How does this message help you in making disciples?