

Take Your Stand
Prayer—Our Communication During the Battle
Ephesians 6:10-18

March 16, 2014

Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: We come to an end in looking at this rich passage in Ephesians 6:10-18. We have learned some rich theology as well as practical application for the spiritual battles that we face. First, we overviewed this passage and simply said that as Christians, we are in a battle. We are in a battle for our convictions, our culture, our children, and our churches. As a result, we are in a battle for our families and our future. We are called to take our stand in this battle. Actually, there are 3 main imperatives in this text: Be strengthened by the LORD, put on the full armor of God, and stand.

Having given these three imperatives, Paul underscored 7 spiritual weapons that we should avail ourselves to as we carry out these imperatives. First, there is truth. We said that truth is the under armor. It is not the most important piece (they are all of equal importance), but it is the first piece. That is, it is the piece that serves as the undergirding of all the other pieces. Then, there is righteousness—the protector of the heart. Then, we looked at the shoes of the Gospel of peace and said that this signifies our readiness to be in the battle by sharing the Gospel. Next in the list is the resource of faith, and we saw that it is the resource that carries with it a wonderful promise. Then, there is the helmet of salvation. We learned that this is not so much the call to salvation, but the assurance of salvation. The last two resources are probably our two most tangible resources. Last week, we considered the Word of God. We said it was our “Go To” weapon. It’s the weapon that we must turn to over and over again in the intensity of the battle. That brings us to the final resource—prayer.

Text: ¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. ¹² For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³ This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. ¹⁴ Stand, therefore,

with truth like a belt around your waist,
righteousness like armor on your chest,
¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness
for the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In every situation take the shield of faith,
and with it you will be able to extinguish
all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is God’s word.

¹⁸ Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Introduction: This is an important subject. I entered this week of study thinking “What else is there to say on the subject of prayer that we haven’t thought about a thousand times before?” But, as always, the Word comes alive and I want to share with you in a very simple way on the subject of prayer just from this one verse. In order to provide us an outline to our thoughts, I want to just walk us through this text for a step by step interpretation. Then, I want to show you, in its context of battle, a contemporary analogy that I think will be helpful to our interpretation. Finally, I want to leave us with a “so what” or some application.

Interpretation

3 Key Words or Phrases:

“All”—The key word of this verse is “all.” The simple Greek word best translated “all” is found four times in this verse. I think each of the “alls” help us understand something useful and important about prayer.

- All Prayers = a variety of ways to pray

We are to pray in a variety of ways. How are we to pray? We are to pray in all kinds of ways. We are to pray soft and loud, short and long, standing and kneeling and sitting and while lying down, publicly and privately, alone and with others. We are to pray different kinds of prayers. We are to pray prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and intercession. Think about how the LORD’s prayer demonstrates this.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name (Praise and adoration)
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven (intercession)
Give us this day, our daily bread (Intercession)
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us (confession)
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Intercession)
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. (Back to adoration)

- At All Times= in every situation—Never resist the urge to pray.
- With all perseverance= never give up—The Devil wants you to quit praying. The Devil wants you to believe that “there’s no use.” The Devil whispers, “You don’t really believe.” He whispers, “You don’t really think God hears.” So, we must persevere.
- For all Saints= unselfishly—As we mature in our walk, we move beyond ourselves to others.

“In the Spirit”—Reminder: Spiritual battles can only be won with spiritual means! Prayer is not just words—it’s “in the Spirit.” Don’t worry about getting the words right, worry about getting the spirit right.

“And stay alert in this”—The more alert we are to the intensity of the battle, the more intense our praying.

As the cross drew near for Jesus, He went to pray and invited others to go with him. They (the disciples) fell asleep. Jesus, though, prayed with such intensity that Luke recorded that His sweat fell like drops of blood. The disciples fell asleep because they failed to see the intensity of the spiritual battle being waged.

Illustration: A Radio

As we come to the end of this extended teaching on spiritual battles, we realize that the whole scene involves the armor of a warrior ready for battle. If we extend that analogy to the contemporary soldier, I thought about how one of the chief pieces of equipment is the radio. The radio keeps the line of communication open to the commanding officer. Prayer is our radio—our communication system to our Heavenly commander-in-chief.

The analogy points to at least these three things:

- Our praying must be two-way.
- Prayer is the means by which we call for back-up.
- Our communication is always on.

Application:

Establish the habit of praying at appointed times so that you might move toward praying all the time.

The time to learn to pray is not in the heat of the battle.