

1

Pray at all times

Ephesians 6:18-24

Last week we dressed in the armor of God 11-17 and now we need to stay dressed w/ 1 Belt of truth, 2 Breastplate of righteousness 3 Feet w/ gospel of peace 4 Shield of faith 5 Helmet of salvation 6 Sword of spirit.

Prayer isn't the 7th piece of armor in warfare w/ the enemy. Paul is in prison guarded by Roman soldiers & uses their physical armor as a spiritual metaphor in our battle w/ Satan & the enemies of the Christian faith. Prayer is what breaths' life into all parts of the armor. As the body is dead w/o the spirit so the armor w/o prayer lacks power. Prayer is the switch that activates each piece of armor. As Samson went out against the Philistines, not knowing the Lord had departed & was defeated. So we as believers may be dressed for battle yet w/o prayer defeat is eminent. Prayer supplies power to every piece of armor & ensures victory.

Wm Cowper poet & hymn writer 1700's "Restraining prayer, we cease to fight; Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright; And Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees"

18 With **all** prayer and petition pray at **all** times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with **all** perseverance and **petition** for **all** the saints, (we may have our spiritual armor on, standing firm yet w/o prayer we like Israel trusting in ark, w/o praying to Lord-defeated 1Sam4) **19** and pray on my behalf, that **utterance** may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with **boldness** the mystery of the gospel, (specifics not general-save the world) **20** for which I am an **ambassador** in **chains**; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (I know I should, help me to do it)

Big word-- **all** --not some or part but a **career** of prayer & petition--asking on behalf of others & ourselves. "**all**" four times in 18 – inductive bible study (June Dan Finfrock) OIA look for words that repeat themselves. All, every, the whole signifies the highest degree, the maximum of the thing which the noun signifies—:18 is the activity of prayer.

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There is personal prayer, Paul *on my behalf* 19. General prayer for *all the saints* 18. Particular prayer-*Tychicus & all faithful ministers/servants* 21

all prayer & petition all kinds; public, private, formal, informal, oral, mental, spontaneous, planned, secret, spoken, congregational—all, any & every prayer. *Illus* backslider in store; in elevator, on airplane, in office, at church, surfing, golfing, shopping, HS brings to mind, coming to church leaving church.

EM Bounds in Purpose in Prayer says of General Stonewall Jackson officer during American Civil War, was a man of prayer. Jackson said 'I have so fixed the habit of prayer in my mind that I never raise a glass of water to my lips w/o asking God's blessing, never seal a letter w/o putting a word of prayer under the seal, never take a letter from the post w/o a brief sending of my thoughts heavenward, never change my classes in the lecture room w/o a minute's petition for the cadets who go out & for those who come in'

We are to have a disposition of praying at all times, chronic in prayer, habitual in making our request made known to God. *'We can do much after we pray but until we pray we cannot do anything but pray'* John Buyan We are to persevere in prayer *'at all times'* to be ready in season & out of season...when feel like it or you don't—in good times & bad.

Earnest, intense heartfelt prayers – having a burden for the Lord—To effect God in heaven our prayers must effect us on earth. *'you draw near w/ lips but heart is far away'*....prayers w/ feeling **not** lifeless liturgy from prayer book **Lk 18:1-8**

Spiritual prayers *'in the spirit'* Born again believers are prompted by HS who places the burden or prayer in mind & on heart—those things that concern God & others *1Jn 5:14,15 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if*

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we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

Alert *Lk 21:36* “*But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.*” watch & pray *Mk 14:38 NKJ* *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*”

Intercessory prayer ‘*for all the saints*’ Samuel *1Sam 12:23* “*Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.*”

Utterance—gathering into the mind words to be said. Paul asks for ability to articulate the gospel to others in order to bring them to Christ *2Cor 10:10* ‘*his physical presence is weak, his speech despicable, contemptible....*’ Some have natural ability & can excite the mind w/ a smooth, seamless delivery. Paul wants the Holy Spirit to be felt & supersede any skill in ability to communicate so the *good news of cross of Christ* be the impact of him speaking. God wants people left w/ Jesus not speakers personality. And doing it w/.....

Boldness—freedom of speaking w/o camouflage--no uncertainty--fearless confidence. Early church often prayed for boldness. They were persecuted-killed & imprisoned. 6 million martyred w/in 300 years of church history.

Acts 4:29-31 It is what Paul prays that he not be intimidated but bold.

Speak boldly as ought—Suffering magnifies boldness in the Lord—weakness, chains, cross amplifies the message to those God is calling ‘*broad is the way-destruction....narrow is the path-life...*’ Jesus is not going to pump egos, not lift you up above others thinking you are better---but likely humble you in your own eyes & before others.

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Mystery—something previously hidden but now fully revealed. Gospel good news of Jesus Christ-death burial & resurrection—Believing & forgiven

Ambassador – **paradox**-in **chains**—One held in respect, who represents a higher authority, country or king acts to promote a specified activity, a diplomat--yet Paul in chains, **Jesus who although He existed in....**

Zech 9:9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Lk 5:32 AMP I did not come to call the [self-proclaimed] righteous [who see no need to repent], but sinners to repentance [to change their old way of thinking, to turn from sin and to seek God and His righteousness].”

We are simply beggars telling other beggars where the bread is.

21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing,(so you can pray w/ wisdom to be precise-spurgeon) **Tychicus**, the **beloved** brother and **faithful** minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. **22** And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. **23** **Peace** be to the brethren, and **love** with **faith**, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.(peace, love & faith given by God **24** Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love **incorruptible**.(greatest of all is love-& w/ it God's benefits & unmerited & unearned grace & goodness given to those who love Him—incorruptible, honest, true & constant

Paul's situation is prison...those who wanted to make him jealous but couldn't **Phil 1:15** Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from goodwill; **16** the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; **17** the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking that they are causing me distress in my imprisonment. **18** What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice.

Tychicus – loveable and faithful---When you are faithful you are loved. He sent to know Paul's condition so to pray more effectively. But Paul not just thinking about his ministry but their welfare—sent to **comfort** **parakaleo**-close, beside--come alongside to encourage--personal contact is crucial in body of Christ for survival.

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In the 18th C Frederick the Great of Prussia set out to discover what the 'natural language' of humans was. What dialect would children speak if none were imposed upon them by adults. He issued a decree & brought newborns to a special nursery he set up for research--widows, unwanted, women who died childbirth. No speaking, communicating or physical contact was to be given the infants, fed mechanically w/ wire bottle holders & in total seclusion. Result? All the infants died from isolation.

Peace, love & faith, things only God can give to those who know Him & are in relationship to Him, why would a person not want these benefits of knowing God. In a world where peace is in short supply Jesus said ***Jn 14:27*** ***“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.***

All essential parts of human make up are joined together when God's peace is ruling. W/o it enters stress & that lead to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (fear even when the distress is in the past) also causes health issues like high blood pressure &

Grace mentioned first and last 1:2 and here, Paul's favorite word.

Incorruptible unfading and permanent – markings of Christ on our lives