

Weapon of Prayer

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[0 : 0 0] So let's return again to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6, we will look at Ephesians 6, verses 18 through 20, though our primary focus will be verse 18.

I'll remind you that the Apostle Paul says we as Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare against spiritual forces of evil. So he implores us to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

We need everything from the belt of truth to the sword of the Spirit. We need to be adequately armed in the strength of the Lord's might. Then he says in verse 18 that we are to be praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. And also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.

Now I used to find it curious that Paul finds a way to illustrate all of the spiritual weapons in this passage with the exception of prayer.

[1 : 3 1] Truth is like a belt. Righteousness is like a breastplate. The gospel serves as shoes for our feet and so on. And prayer is like, I don't know, Paul doesn't provide any kind of illustration for prayer.

He simply says, pray. Now I have found that curious because I thought surely Paul could have come up with something to bring prayer into this whole armor of God motif.

I mean, maybe prayer could be like a spear or a dagger or maybe some arm guards or chain mail, something. He surely could have come up with something. And maybe that was the problem. He just couldn't think of anything.

Maybe he thought, you know, nothing in Roman armor seems to really fit the weapon of prayer adequately. So, you know, I'll just tell the Ephesians to pray.

Just pray. Well, a few years ago, I was speaking with a Vietnam vet. And he actually fought in the jungles of Vietnam during that war.

[2 : 3 0] And he was telling me just how terrifying the experience was. He said, you're moving through the jungle. You can't see more than a few yards in front of you.

If that, every tree and bush seems to move. And when bullets start flying, you don't know where they're coming from. He told me it was horrible.

Every moment of it. I said, I can't even imagine. But I suspect you learned what it means to pray without ceasing.

He said, you better believe I did. He said, everyone learned to pray without ceasing. He went on to tell me that some of the men in his unit were unapologetically atheistic.

They did not believe in God. And they made that very clear. But, he told me, I could hear them praying audibly when we were in that jungle.

[3 : 3 2] You see, even in the context of a physical battle, prayer is actually a very typical weapon of war. Obviously, a soldier, he'll grab all of his equipment.

He'll grab his gun before going into the battlefield. But he quite naturally also reaches for prayer. Even in a physical battle, prayer tends to be a customary weapon.

We just sort of instinctively know it. And so, prayer stands on its own. So, maybe Paul doesn't need a clever illustration for prayer. He doesn't need to liken it to some other piece of armor because everyone instinctively knows you don't go into battle without prayer.

And even if you think you can, once you get into that battle and the bullets start flying, you start praying. It's a piece of armor all on its own.

Now, I've heard several people attempt to illustrate prayer within the theme of this passage. And maybe my favorite is the comparison of prayer to a soldier's communication with his commanding officer.

[4 : 37] I think that's, you know, an appropriate analogy. That's a crucial part of any warfare. It's vital that the commanding officer be able to communicate with his troops and, of course, vice versa.

Have you ever heard the name, if I pronounce it correctly, have you ever heard the name Hiroo Onoda? He was a Japanese soldier in World War II.

And near the end of 1944, he was sent with some of his troops, the Japanese army, into the Philippines.

And Onoda was supposed to lead some guerrilla warfare on the Philippine Islands. And he was given strict instructions. Do not surrender. Do not take your own life.

Do not retreat. Stand your ground. Stand your ground. Do not stay. Do not stay exactly where you are until you hear directly from your commanding officer.

[5 : 39] Simple enough, right? Well, less than a year later, Japan surrendered. The war was over. But because of various factors, Onoda, he didn't know that right away.

Now, to make a long story short, they did eventually do everything they could to inform him the war was over. They spoke to him from loudspeakers across the jungle. They dropped leaflets out of the sky. But he would not come out of hiding. He would not give up.

Why? Well, he thought the enemy was trying to lure him out. It wasn't until 1974 that someone finally tracked down his commanding officer who had long since retired, I believe he was selling books somewhere, sent him to find Anoda and convince him the war was over.

Anoda was still found wearing his uniform, what was left of it, and still clinging to his rifle after 29 years. It's a fascinating story. You should look it up sometime. But it could have all been avoided, nearly 30 years of starvation and sleep deprivation and fear, if Anoda had remained in contact with his commanding officer. Well, there's a sense of that here in what Paul says, be praying at all times in the spirit. Tim Keller has said, prayer is both conversation and encounter with God. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees, he comes face to face with God. Prayer is direct communication with God, our commanding officer, if you will. Now, that's not a perfect analogy, but there's at least some truth to it. Regardless,

Paul makes it clear that prayer is vital in our spiritual warfare. It's vital to most soldiers in physical battle, and it should be vital to Christians in spiritual battle. And I want you to notice the example that Paul himself sets for us in this letter. At least twice, he mentions his own prayers for the believers in Ephesus. In chapter 1, he says, and I'll read the entire sentence. This is one sentence.

[8 : 11] For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And believe it or not, that is not the longest sentence of the Bible. I believe the longest is also in Ephesians 1, but it's verses 3 through 14.

It's something like 200 words in the Greek. Anyhow, Paul does not cease to give thanks for the Ephesians and for their faith. They may be saved, they may be chosen by God and predestined for eternal glory, but Paul still prays for them, and he doesn't stop praying for them. He does not cease to pray for them. He wants them to know more and more of God, more and more of Christ, more and more of their salvation.

Then, in chapter 3 of this letter, Paul mentions his prayers again, and this almost reads as a spontaneous prayer in the middle of the letter itself. Paul says, For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all

the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Increased knowledge. More strength in the power of God. These are the themes of Paul's prayers for the Ephesians, which I'll leave you to study on your own, but they might be a little bit different than what we often pray. But you see, Paul wants these believers prepared for spiritual warfare. And that was the focus of his prayers for them. He was praying that God would equip them for battle with knowledge and with strength. And that is the very reason he says in chapter 6, pray, pray, pray.

[11 : 29] In fact, going back to chapter 6, you'll notice that word all. Praying at all times in the spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. There's something comprehensive about what Paul has in mind concerning prayer.

And we might have guessed that. Clearly, he believes prayer is important. I mean, something like 13% of this letter is devoted to prayer. And not only that, but Paul brings this discussion of spiritual warfare to its conclusion by telling Christians to pray. Pray, pray, pray. This is crucial.

Now, anytime we talk about prayer, there are questions that arise. If we understand that God is sovereign, for instance, we might wonder, why do we need to pray at all? Are we able to change God's mind?

Can we really affect the course of our lives through prayer if God has already determined our paths? Back in Numbers 23, Balaam said, God is not man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should change his mind. James says of God, there is no variation or shadow due to change. God is steady. He's constant. He doesn't make bad decisions, and he doesn't change his mind. So what's the purpose of prayer? Earlier this week, or maybe it was last week, I sat down and wrote an answer to the question, should Christians go to the doctor or take medicine? Now, that probably seems like a strange question to most of us, but there have been Christians along the way who have felt seeking medical help was actually showing a lack of faith in God. God is our ultimate healer, right?

[13 : 32] So for some, going to the doctor or taking medicine is like turning your back on the great physician and saying, you know, I don't trust God to heal me. I need to go to a doctor instead. Well, in my response, I pointed out that, yes, God can miraculously and supernaturally heal, but more often than not, he actually works through doctors and he works through medicine.

You see, we have to remember that God doesn't ordain merely the end result. He also ordains the means, and he doesn't typically work in a vacuum. He uses doctors, and he uses medicine to heal us according to his will. Well, the same is true for our prayer.

God works through our prayers. He has ordained the end, and he has ordained the means, which in many cases is the very prayers we speak. Let me give you an example. In John chapter 11, Jesus's friend Lazarus, he has died. Now, what has God ordained to happen? In that particular event, what has God ordained to happen? Well, he intended for Lazarus to die so Jesus could raise him from the dead, and we see that at the very start of the chapter when Jesus very intentionally waits for Lazarus to die before he goes to visit. And then he says in John 11, 4, it is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. So Lazarus died.

That was part of God's plan. Jesus goes to raise him from the dead, also part of God's plan. But how does Jesus do it? Obviously, God could have simply brought Lazarus back to life just like that. Well, Jesus could have done the same. No words had to be spoken. Jesus didn't even need to be there. No physical act needed to be done. But what happened? Well, Jesus physically went, and then he prayed.

[15 : 47] Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that you sent me.

When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. And the man who died came out. Did Jesus need to offer that prayer to raise Lazarus from the dead?

No, of course not. But that prayer was part of the means God ordained to accomplish the end he had also ordained. In other words, he had his plan. He had a plan that would not change, and Jesus' prayer was actually part of how he intended to accomplish that plan.

Abraham's prayer in Genesis 18 is another example of this. You may remember that God told Abraham that he had plans to destroy the city of Sodom for their wickedness.

And Abraham begins pleading with the Lord. Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are 50 righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the 50 righteous who are in it?

[17:05] And God says, okay, if I find 50 righteous people in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake. And then Abraham continues.

What about 45? Would you spare it for 45? What about 40? What about 30? What about 20? Lord, would you spare it for only 10?

Now we know how the story ends. God destroyed the city. But what happens through the prayers of Abraham? God doesn't change his mind.

The plan really doesn't change. But we do learn something about God, don't we? Namely, we learn how compassionate he is. As wicked as that city was, he was willing to spare it for only 10 righteous people.

You know, we see that compassion of his growing throughout Abraham's prayers. He'll spare it for 50. He'll spare it for 45. He'll spare it for 40, 30, 20, and even 10.

[18:12] He will spare the city for 10 people, despite all of their rampant wickedness. And we can learn from many examples in the Bible of the various ways God uses prayers to accomplish his purpose, which is not always what the person praying intended in the beginning.

But briefly, I'll give you just one more example to think about. Listen to what God said to Abraham all the way back in Genesis 15. Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. So God says the Israelites, Abraham's offspring, will become servants in a foreign nation, and they will suffer for roughly 400 years, and then God will bring them out.

Okay? And of course, we know all of that happened. We know the story of Joseph and how the Israelites ended up in Egypt. We know the story of Pharaoh and his hard heart and his oppression of the Israelites, using them as slaves, and we know the story of Moses leading them out of Egypt. Now, jumping ahead to Exodus chapter 2, near the end of the chapter, we read, during those days, the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery, and they cried out for help.

[19:49] Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God, and God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God saw the people of Israel, and God knew. And what happens next? God calls to Moses from a burning bush, and sends him to Egypt to rescue his people.

Obviously, obviously, God ordained the end. In fact, he told Abraham the end. He said, they shall come out of Egypt with great possessions.

I will rescue them. But it wasn't until the cries, it wasn't until the prayers of Israel, that God, we're told, remembered his covenant with Abraham.

Of course, that doesn't mean he forgot. But he waited. He waited until they cried out to him. And remember, even the timing of all of this was ordained.

[20:53] 400 years in slavery, God said. So how did the prayers of Israel affect anything? Well, those prayers were part of the plan.

They would serve as the instrument, if you will. God ordained the plan from start to finish, and part of that plan was the cries of Israel. Once the cries came, God would call Moses into action.

It's time. Now, this doesn't eliminate all of the mystery surrounding prayer, but I think we can understand the point that God uses our prayers to accomplish his purposes.

And for that reason, we should be all the more motivated to pray. To pray, to pray, to pray. Or as Paul says, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

And maybe we still wonder. I don't get it. I don't understand why I need to pray to a sovereign God who already ordained the end. Well, let me remind you that the Lord Himself prayed.

[22:00] Jesus was fully God, and yet He prayed. And He prayed often. Mark 1.35 says, Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place.

And there He prayed. He began His days in prayer. And obviously, it was a priority for Him. He basically ended His life in prayer.

You remember when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane. He withdrew from His disciples, and He knelt down, and He prayed. Even on the cross, He prayed.

At least three times that are recorded for us. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And then, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. So the very last thing Christ spoke before His death was a word of prayer to His Father. Hebrews 5:7 says, In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death.

[23 : 16] And He was heard because of His reverence. Jesus prayed. Now, we may discuss or even debate the reasons as much as we want, but something should be very clear to us, and that is that prayer is really not optional for the Christian.

It's a necessity. Specifically, it's a necessity as we are engaged in spiritual battles against the devil and against evil. It is not as though prayer is just some luxury, some sort of bonus for the Christian life where we wait to turn to God until we really need something.

praying. No, that's not what Paul says. Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. Now, before we focus on that word all, notice the phrase in the Spirit.

Praying in the Spirit, I would argue, is the only effective way to pray. And to understand what Paul means by this, I want to briefly jump over to Romans chapter 8.

I'll read Romans 8 verses 6 through 9 to start. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

[24 : 44] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.

So, to be clear, praying in the Spirit is not some special way to pray. Right? It's not some extraordinary way to pray. It's the only way to pray.

It's the only way to pray. To borrow from J.B. Phillips, Paul essentially says the carnal attitude sees no further than natural things, but the spiritual attitude reaches out after things of the Spirit.

The carnal mind, Paul says, is hostile to God. So, if we're not praying in the Spirit, we might utter the words of a prayer, but it's not really a prayer. It's not sincere. It's not a prayer that can please God because those who are in the flesh, verse 8, cannot please God.

[25 : 53] So, how do we pray in the Spirit? Well, glance down at verse 15. For you, and he's speaking to Christians here, for you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided that we suffer with him in order that we may be also glorified with him.

It is by the Spirit that we are even able to cry, Abba, Father. We might say it is by the Spirit we pray. Always. So, let's note three things here. First, we are able to pray in a way that pleases God because we are his children.

We are not in the flesh. We are in the Spirit. We have received the Spirit of adoption into God's family, and the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

[27 : 15] Second, because we are children of God, we have an intimacy with our Heavenly Father that further enables us and certainly helps motivate us to turn to him in prayer.

Forget the part about him being a commanding officer. Father. He's our Father. He's our Father. So, like the commanding officer, he still provides instruction and he provides protection, but there's also a profound love and concern that he has for us as his children.

Meaning, he will always listen and he will always care. As the hymn writer said, what a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear.

What a privilege. To carry everything to God in prayer. And third, we learn from Romans 8 that prayer is far from some ritualistic, cold, mechanical exercise.

It is deeply spiritual. In fact, not only does the Spirit enable us to pray, but he helps us to pray.

Verse 26, likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

[28 : 27] for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

God. So if I were to summarize and condense these three things, if I were to paraphrase what Paul is saying in Ephesians 6.18, I would say, first of all, we desperately need the help of our Father, so we desperately need to turn to Him in prayer.

And second, prayer is a remarkably simple thing. We humble ourselves, we submit to God and to His Spirit and we speak to our Father.

We cast our cares upon Him. And if we ever find ourselves thinking, I don't know what to pray for, I don't know how to pray, well, the Spirit is with you when you pray. He's essentially translating your prayers for you.

And as Jesus says, if you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him.

[29 : 46] Well, returning to Ephesians 6, let's consider the remainder of verse 18 in four parts. Praying at all times, praying with all prayer, praying with all perseverance, and praying for all saints.

First, praying at all times. Now, over the course of this study, we've talked frequently about the ongoing spiritual warfare we face. The devil is relentless.

Even though he knows that he has lost believers to Christ, he still attacks. He still tempts. He still tries to undermine our faithfulness to God. So it's not surprising that Paul would tell us to be equally relentless in how we pray.

In other words, we need to pray consistently. We need to pray often. As it was for Jesus, prayer needs to be a priority for us. Put another way, as Paul does elsewhere, we need to pray without ceasing.

Without ceasing. There's a word the New Testament uses quite often, and at least six times this word is used in connection with prayer. And that word is devoted or constant.

[31 : 02] Romans 12, 12, for example, be constant in prayer. Be devoted to prayer. Acts 1, 14, the church with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer.

Colossians 4, 2, continue steadfastly in prayer. Be devoted. Continually devoted in prayer. Of course, being devoted to prayer or praying without ceasing doesn't mean that praying is all we ever do.

That's clearly not the case in Scripture, but generally speaking, it means that our entire disposition is inclined toward heaven. You know, in the Old Testament, Enoch is described as walking with God.

And I like to think of prayer in that way. It's not as though we're always on our knees voicing a formal prayer. It's more like we sense the presence of God moment by moment as He's walking with us and as we're walking with Him and we turn to Him constantly throughout the day and we speak to Him.

So, allow me to state the obvious. If mealtimes are the only time we pray, we are not really devoted to prayer. If we only pray when we need something or when things are not going well, we are not really devoted to prayer.

[32 : 32] A brief prayer only before bedtime, that's not devotion to prayer. A quick, help me Lord when someone cuts you off on the highway, if that's the only praying you do, that's not devotion to prayer.

Devotion to prayer is consistent, it's continual, it is as Paul says here, praying at all times. That's all encompassing. Then Paul says, we are to pray with all prayer and supplication.

Excuse me. Your translation might say, prayers and requests. Now, that might sound redundant, but I think what he's getting at here is that we are to pray in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons.

You know what prayer means and supplication is basically another word for prayer. Again, he's emphasizing the point. Pray, pray, pray. Perhaps you know the acronym ACTS, A-C-T-S, which stands for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

And that word supplication means praying for our needs or praying for the needs of others. I think that's a helpful way to think about the different ways we should pray.

[34 : 01] It's not always, Lord, I need this or Lord, help me with this. We could simply pray our praise and worship to God. That prayer will stand on its own.

We have plenty of examples of that in the Psalms. We can confess our sins. We can thank God without asking Him for anything at all. Not every prayer needs to be identical and not every prayer needs to follow a very precise formula that covers all four areas and more.

Just pray. Pray, pray, pray at all times for all things. Pray, pray, pray, pray, next Paul tells us to pray with all perseverance or your Bible might say always keep on praying.

Keep alert, he says. It's kind of like Jesus telling His disciples, why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

Don't you understand the spiritual warfare that we are engaged in? Don't you understand that our adversary, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour?

[35 : 12] Maybe you don't feel like you're being attacked right now, but that's all the more reason to pray that you might prevent it from happening or that the Lord might prevent it from happening.

We need to pray. Don't stop. Don't get sleepy. Don't become complacent or apathetic. Again, pray, pray, pray, pray. And I suppose we could look at this another way.

It's possible that Paul is implying that we be persistent, not just in prayer in general, but in the way we pray for anything in particular.

You know, sometimes it doesn't seem as though God is answering our prayers. And what do we do in those moments? Well, we might be tempted to give up, but the Bible would tell us otherwise.

It tells us to be persistent. Keep going back to the Lord. Keep praying. Take, for instance, the widow in Luke 18. Jesus tells the parable of a widow who needed help from a judge.

[36 : 15] She was treated unfairly. We don't know the precise circumstances, but she goes to the judge for justice. And we're told for a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, though I need neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

And Jesus says, will not God give justice to his elect who cry to him day and night? Of course he will. Is that the reason we're prone to give up on prayer?

Are we frustrated when we don't get an immediate response or perhaps don't get the response that we were hoping for? Well, Jesus says, learn from the widow. She didn't give up.

She was persistent and her prayer was eventually answered. Now, to be clear, our prayers aren't always answered in the way we want them to be answered.

But that's why it's important to understand that we are praying in the Spirit. We are really trying to align our will and our prayers with the Spirit and with his will.

[37 : 36] It's like Paul told the Galatians, if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. It's why we pray, Lord, your will be done.

Lastly, we pray for all the saints. You know, it seems almost strange to say this, but we can be kind of selfish in our prayers.

I certainly can. We can be self-centered, always praying for what we need, but forgetting about everyone else. Well, we've seen the way Paul prayed.

He prayed for the Ephesians continually. And we could also examine the Lord's Prayer in John 17. Jesus spends the entire chapter praying for his disciples.

In fact, he prays for the disciples who are with him, and then he says, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. In other words, he prayed for all the saints.

[38 : 46] All the saints. I'm about out of time, but in closing, I just want to read from Ian Duguid in his book, *The Whole Armor of God*. This is from his chapter on prayer, and I thought this might be a fitting conclusion.

He writes, some of the books I have read about prayer left me feeling crushed and inadequate, unable to conceive how anyone could pray sufficiently.

But if we circle back to the idea of prayer as the outworking of a relationship, it becomes a different story. If prayer is simply responding to the promptings of the Spirit to cry out to my Heavenly Father with thanksgiving, with requests, with intercessions, and with sighs of confession and repentance, then all of a sudden it doesn't seem so hard.

If you think of praying in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers persistently for all of the saints as a job description, it will wear you out. But for us as children of the great King, it is simply living life in the presence of our King.

It is lifting our hearts and minds and voices regularly to Him in petition and praise as the Spirit leads. What is more, prayer is not a task we carry out alone.

[40 : 10] Jesus lived the perfect prayer life that you and I never can, constantly communicating with His Father, constantly interceding for others, and even praying for future followers like you and

me.

What is more, He is still praying for you. In Hebrews 7.25, we read that Christ ever lives beside the throne of God the Father to make intercession for His people.

The Spirit too intercedes for us and with us. In Romans 8.26, Paul tells us that when we don't know how or what to pray, the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

With company like that, praying with and for us, how will the Father not give us exactly what is best? Jesus' constant prayer covers our weak, inconsistent, and often half-hearted praying.

So, pray in the Spirit as the outflow of your relationship with your Heavenly Father. Pray in season and out of season on all sorts of occasions for all kinds of prayers and requests, persistently for all the saints.

[41 : 23] Then indeed, as Paul prays for the Ephesians, peace will grip your hearts along with love and faith and the grace of God will constantly be with you in the midst of the fiercest battles along with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I'll just add one more thing to that. As Paul teaches us to pray for one another, one of the other things that becomes clear, if it was not clear before, is that as we are engaged in these spiritual battles, we are not meant to go it alone.

Obviously, as we've talked about, the Lord goes with us. The Lord ultimately fights these battles. But we also go with one another. We also go with fellow saints, which is why it is so crucial that we're not just praying for ourselves, but we're praying for one another as well.

Let's turn to God in prayer right now. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the armor that you have supplied to us through Christ Jesus our Lord.

We thank you for your help in our spiritual battles. And I pray that you would help us to pray more consistently, more persistently, praying for all of the things that we should be praying for and all of the people that we should be praying for.

[42 : 50] Bring them to our minds constantly. As we go from day to day, moment to moment, let us always be thinking about your presence in our lives and always lifting up our hearts and our minds and our voices to you in prayer.

Lord, help us to this end. We thank you for this ability you've given us through Christ and through your spirit to communicate to you to have this kind of intimacy with you, our Heavenly Father, at any given moment.

It's all because Christ has saved us according to your grace. We praise you and we thank you in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.