

## Refuge City Church — November 5, 2023 “Prayer in Warfare” (Ephesians 6:18-24)

### **Introduction**

- **LAST WEEK:** We began to look at how we arm ourselves with the strength & armor of God.
  - But, we didn't finish the task. There is one more thing we often forget when it comes to waging war.
- **TODAY:** Let me sum it up with the following...
  - When you live a life in pursuit of holiness, unity, and love, you're going to get attacked.
    - Spiritual warfare is real and unrelenting.
    - Yet if you purposefully strengthen up and armor up, the victory of Jesus will be that much more evident in your life.
    - Like an infomercial... “But wait! There's more!”
  - In the midst of war, if you are not in communication with your commanding officer, you've lost the ability to communicate, you've been captured, or are dead.
    - So understand the necessity of prayer in warfare!
- **CONTEXT:** **Ephesians 6:13-17**, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,”

### **“Weaponize your Prayers” [Verse 18]**

“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,”

- Prayer: What? When? How?

1. **“praying at all times in the Spirit”**... Pray at *all* times!
  - **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, “pray without ceasing,”
  - Always be in communication, in His presence at all times.
  - If *every* day brings a spiritual battle, if we are to deny ourselves *daily*, then we ought to pray *every day*.
  - **REMEMBER:** You're not alone in this fight.
  - Did you know the Holy Spirit prays for us?!
    - **Romans 8:26-27**, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. 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.”

- Like a baby who knows what they want/need, but cannot properly utter the words. Yet its parents know the frustrated/confused/sad tones of their child's cries.
  - **Galatians 4:6**, "And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.'"
- When Jesus prayed in the garden prior to His crucifixion...
  - **Matthew 26:38-39**, "Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death...' And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.'"
  - This is praying in the Spirit!
    - It's having an awareness of God's presence with us at all times, recognizing our dependency on Him, knowing His will supersedes our own.
    - We should desire God's will above our own at all times.
    - **Galatians 5:16-17, 25**, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do... If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."
- 2. **"with all prayer and supplication."**... Our default is to pray for ourselves and protection/salvation from our circumstances. ["God, would you do this..."]
  - Yet how many ways are there to pray?
  - Don't underestimate the power of a heart of gratitude to God in prayer.
  - **1 Thessalonians 5:16-19**, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit."
    - You're going to quench the Spirit when you don't rejoice, when you don't pray, when you don't give thanks, when you decide not to listen. [water on fire]
    - Don't be so self-focused that you don't praise God in the midst of your war, thank Him for the opportunity to see Him bring victory.
- 3. **"To that end, keep alert with all perseverance,"**... Be alert. Be prepared!
  - Make your requests, yet do so with alertness [has the connotation of military readiness; context with last week's study]
  - **QUOTE:** "Prayer is an engine wieldable by every believer, mightier than all the embattled artillery of hell." [E.K. Simpson]
  - **QUOTE:** "... nuclear wars cannot be won with rifles. Likewise, satanic wars cannot be won by human energy." [Harold Hoehner]
  - **EXAMPLES**
    - Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.
      - **Nehemiah 4:17, 20**, "... Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other... In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."
    - Moses & Joshua fighting against the Amalekites.
      - **Exodus 17:11, 13**, "Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword."

- **LASTWEEK:** We mentioned the necessity to strengthen up & armor up. There is a connection between our dependency on God and our active steps of faith.
  - There is always a call to ‘go and do’ by God. Yet, without recognizing our need for God in every circumstance and the strength that only He can provide, there is no victory.
  - **Mark 13:33**, “Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.”
    - The days are getting spiritually darker. We must stand guard!
    - Should we relax spiritually and fall asleep, that’s when the attacks come.
      - Washington crossing the Delaware on Christmas night... he caught them unaware.
      - **Mark 14:32-38**, “And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
- 4. **“making supplication for all the saints,”** ... Be humble. Pray for your brothers and sisters in arms.
  - **Ephesians 1:16**, “I do not cease to *give thanks* for you, remembering you in my prayers,”
  - **Colossians 1:9**, “...we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the *knowledge of his will* in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,”
  - **2 Thessalonians 1:11**, “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may *fulfill every resolve for good* and every *work of faith by his power*,”
  - **Philippians 1:3-4**, “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with *joy*,”
  - **James 5:16**, “Therefore, *confess your sins to one another* and pray for one another...”
  - **3 John 1:2**, “Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in *good health*, as it goes well with your soul.”
  - **2 Timothy 1:3**, “...I remember you constantly in my prayers *night and day*.”

### **“Ask for Prayer” [Verse 19-20]**

“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.”

- Pray for others, and ask them to pray for you.
  - Herein lies a bit of a warning. Be careful in *how* you ask them to pray.
  - Paul did *not* pray for comfort, or release from his circumstances... He prayed for wisdom & boldness in the midst of his situation.
- Asking for prayer should also align with God’s will for our lives.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:17-18**, “...pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

### **“Concluding Encouragement” [Verses 21-24]**

“So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.”

- Peace, love, faith, and grace.
- This is the very essence of Paul’s letter to the church.
  - This is the manner in which we are to live.
  - Paul began his letter by stating, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are *faithful* in Christ Jesus: *Grace* to you and *peace* from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - This letter serves as a word of encouragement...
    1. To remain faithful to the only gospel.
    2. To promote unity in the body of Christ.
    3. To walk in love.
  - Grace enables us to remain faithful, pursue unity & holiness, and walk in love.
  - Grace enables us to strengthen ourselves in the will of God for the day of battle.
  - Grace enables us carry on despite our circumstances and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ day after day after day.