

Ephesians
Chapter 6:18-20
“The Full Armor of God, Part III”
All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Welcome to our third and final study of The Full Armor of God.

We're actually only going to be studying **verses 18-20** this morning, but for the sake of review ... follow along with me please, beginning in **verse 10** ...

Again ... picture a Roman soldier. You've been trained for battle and assigned to a certain legion. Word's come down that your legion's moving out soon so, it's time suit up for war.

And what we have here is the order from General Paul ...

Put on your **Belt of Truth**. Tuck the lower part of your garment into it so that it'll be out of the way. You don't want that hindrances in the battle.

And put on your **Breastplate of Righteousness**. Strap it down tight to protect your heart.

Then ... shod your feet with **Sandals that protect your steps**.

After that ... take hold of the **Shield of Faith** to deflect all the enemy's fiery darts.

Lastly ... pull on the **Helmet** that protects your mind.

Then ... pick up **your Sword** and you're ready for battle!

Q. But now what? -- Now, you wait ... and wait ... and wait.

Q. For what? – Why not just take off? – Because you're a soldier ... not the Commander. You don't even know what direction to go, much less what the battle plan is. So, you wait ... you wait for orders from the Commander.

No matter how prepared you feel ... no matter how armed up you are ... before you engage in the battle ... you must get instruction and direction from the Commander.

And that ... brings us to **verse 18** ...

Verse 18: When I first read **this verse** ... I had a number of questions ...

- 1. Q. What's the difference between prayer and petition?**
- 2. Q. How's it possible to "pray at all times"?**
- 3. Q. What's the difference between praying in the Spirit and other types of prayer?**
- 4. Q. And who are "all the saints"?**

So, let's see what we can find in way of answers ...

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- 1. Q. What's the difference between prayer and petition?**

"Prayer", means to communicate. To have a conversation.

While "petition", means to make a request.

So, we're to make our requests known to God, but He also asks us to simply commune with Him. To talk things over as with a friend ... **With all prayer and petition ...**

And then it says ... "**pray at all times**" ...

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- 2. Pray at all times ... note that! It's not petition Me at all times ... but pray at all times. Commune with Me by communicating with Me! God wants us to engage Him **at all times**.**

But don't lose track of the bigger picture. The context is still the Full Armor of God. The context is still war. So, in context the passage is telling us that, in this battle, we must remain in constant communication with the Commander.

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- 3. Q. What's the difference between praying in the Spirit and other types of prayer?**

Well ... this one's probably best understood by example ...

- A. John in **Revelation chapter 1**. He says, beginning in **verse 9** ... **I, John, your brother ... 10 ... was in the Spirit on the Lord's day** ...**

And, of course, he goes on from there to tell how he was transported into the spiritual realm and was given a glimpse of Heaven and had a face to face conversation with Christ.

B. We also have the example of Elisha and his attendant, Gehazi in **2nd Kings, chapter 6 (verses 8-17)**, when through prayer in the Spirit, Gehazi's eyes were opened and he was able to see the angel army that was all around to protect them.

C. We also have the example of Jesus Himself in **John, chapter 11** in the story of the resurrection of His friend, Lazarus ...

John 11:38 So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39** Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" **41** So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. **42** "I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me."

Notice ...

1. Although Martha was seeing only with her physical eyes, the Lord was offering her more ... in **verse 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that ... you ... will see the glory of God?"** Not that she would feel it or imagine it, but see it.

2. Also note that the Lord's communication to the Father, is strangely in the past tense. He begins His prayer by saying, **Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**

It's not just a hope that His Father was tuned in. His next commandment shows us that He knew what the Father had already done in giving life back to Lazarus' dead body ...

John 11:43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." **44** The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

D. Then in **Acts chapter 2 (verses 37-47)**, there's another example of praying in the Spirit ... a prayer that also happens to be praying in an unknown tongue. Paul says in ...

1st Corinthians 14:14 ... if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. **15** What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also ...

Bad prayer is better than no prayer ... but prayer in the Spirit is where the bulk of the power and blessing is. Because if prayer's not in the Spirit, then it's in the flesh.

Sometimes prayer is more like a duty than a personal experience with God. And when it is ... that's not praying in the Spirit, but it is better than not praying.

Q. So what does it mean then to “pray in the Spirit”? It means becoming transcendent. It means going beyond the physical world to interact with, the unseen spiritual world in prayer. It's in the Spirit that we get above and beyond our depression and discouraging physical limitations.

It's when we pray in the Spirit that we surrender our words to Him and He translates them into perfect agreement with the heart and will of The Father.

The goal is to pray to the Father, through the Son ... in the Spirit. Now as that relates to this picture of the spiritual battle ... try this test ...

Imagine that you're on the battlefield. Bullets are flying and the enemy's advancing. Fleshly prayer is screaming “Lord save me”, while you're reloading and “Lord kill them” while you're pulling the trigger.

But prayer in the Spirit is lowering your weapon, dropping to your knees, bowing your head and closing your eyes in the midst of it all and saying “Father, not my will, but Thy will be done.” It's a whole different level of trusting the Lord.

4. Q. And the final question ... who are “all the saints”? – Every believer on the planet. But notice with me that unlike the commandment to “**pray always**” on our own behalf, when it comes to other saints ... we're to make “**petition**”.

In addition to being the assigned method for receiving instructions from our Commander, prayer is also the only long range artillery in the arsenal.

With it, we can reach far away battle fronts where brothers and sisters, that we've never met, are engaged in their own skirmish of this war. With it, we can ask Command and Control for reinforcements or the heavy artillery.

We're to make persistent requests on behalf of our spiritual siblings.

Verses 19-20: There's a connection between Paul's counsel to “pray in the Spirit” and his ability to ask for this prayer.

Remember ... Paul's in prison! And yet ... despite his incarceration and circumstances, his prayer isn't that he'd be released, but that he'd be bold ... that he'd be faithful.

Back in **verse 10**, he encouraged us to ...

... be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

Now he sets the example ... saying ...

Ephesians 6:19 ... pray ... that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth ...

Q. Would that have been your prayer? -- I think my prayer might have been a little different ...

“Lord, I Pray boldly that this prison cell would be opened. That I’d be set free. And if not that, then I Pray that they’d feed me better and bring me a softer mattress. I pray that they’d give me back my cell phone and bring me two cups of coffee every morning!”

Q. In Paul’s situation ... how many of us would be preoccupied with our own circumstances and not with Christ’s cause?

But Paul honestly seems pleased to be in prison. He seems excited to have, what he considers, a captive audience ... more commonly known as the guards, to share the gospel with.

He calls himself an ambassador to the Roman prison guards ... “an ambassador in chains for the mystery of the gospel”. Paul’s incarceration may have been against his will, but it WAS the Father’s will. He was there on assignment.

In the same way, you and I are ambassadors in the places where God sends us.

Randall’s an ambassador to Enid Police Department where he works. Tara’s an ambassador to the folks on Vance AFB. Ashley’s an ambassador to her family and the clerk at Wal-Mart and other moms she interacts with.

One more example of prayer ...

Q. Would you turn to 2nd Kings, chapter 19, verse 14? – And while you’re turning there ... let me set the stage.

King Hezekiah was having “one of those” weeks. He was very busy with all kinds of kingdom concerns, but his week took a serious turn toward the horrible when the Assyrian army showed up with a letter threatening him with utter destruction.

It was one of those lump-in-the-throat moments for the king. He felt the weight of this tremendous burden on his shoulders.

It was one of those moments when you just want somebody to hold you until the shaking

stops. Hezekiah needed a strong but understanding friend!

Well, that's where **verse 14** picks up the story saying ...

Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. 15 Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

Hezekiah knew that God was the friend he needed ... and he knew that God was the one who could actually help!

Conclusion: As we wrap this up this morning, I have one final question for you ...

Q. What does it really take for us to, one day, hear the Lord say, "Well done good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21)? – Simply this ... that you remain in the battle until the war's over. That you finish the race.

Let me share with you a great little devotion from Pastor Os Hillman. It's called "**The Training Ground of God**" and it's based on ...

Psalm 144:1 Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.

David was a man skilled in war. From his days as a shepherd boy to the days of serving in Saul's army to leading his own army, David learned to be a skillful warrior. How does one become a skillful warrior?

The only way to become a skillful warrior is to be trained and placed in the middle of the battle. It's only when we're placed in the furnace of battle that we truly learn to fight the real battles. Practice doesn't make you battle ready. War games won't prepare you for facing your real enemy in the battlefield. The stark reality of being in the midst of the battle makes us effective warriors.

Simply reading your Bible won't make you a warrior for the Kingdom. Knowledge without experience is folly. Only when you're placed in situations where there's nothing that can save you other than God. Then you'll learn the lessons of warrior faith.

This is the training ground of God that makes soldiers for Christ. Consider it to be suicidal faith - faith that says, "I wanna be dead to anything that keeps me from fulfilling God's purposes for my life".

It's when your efforts can do nothing to change your circumstance and you're at the mercy of God. These are the real training grounds ... so, don't shrink back from the battle God may be leading you to today. It may be a training ground that's necessary for the calling He has on your life.

*If you can trust Him in these times, you'll know that you've gained a faith that will move mountains and will sustain you in the most difficult of circumstances.
"Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle."*

One of the most interesting things about the Full Armor of God is that it provides no protection for our backs.

It tells us that God never intend for us to retreat. And we see that to do so ... is spiritually dangerous.

Q. But what do we do when we grow weary in the battle? Where's the provision for refreshment? – Praying in the Spirit ... we don't find our rest in retreating from the battle, but in confidently resting in the midst of it.

Spiritual warfare is an everyday struggle between two armies. On one line, the devil, his demons and everyone who's either made a decision to follow Satan or otherwise hasn't made a decision for God ... on the other side, God, His angels and us.

The object of spiritual warfare ... is human souls. Satan wants to smell the eternally burning flesh of as many people as he can ... God wants to bless them in Heaven and hence ... the conflict.

Jesus said ...

Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."

There are only two armies in this war. There's no such thing as neutral. You're either on Satan's team or you're on God's.

So, gear up ... tune in and then fight until that last trumpet blows (**1st Corinthians 15:52**). That's how you'll ultimately hear Him say, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into thy rest."