

“All Prayer at All Times”  
(All Prayer, Part 1)  
Ephesians 6:18  
(Preached at Trinity, April 3, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Since the beginning of **Chapter 4** Paul has been describing the nature of the Christian life. It is a transforming work of God's grace that demands of us great diligence. Paul began this section with:  
**Ephesians 4:1 NAU** - "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"
2. Paul has been systematically describing this life.  
Now, as Paul prepares to close this epistle he reminds us of the intense spiritual warfare that is also a part of the Christian experience.
3. In **Verse 10** Paul describes the Christian approach to this spiritual war:  
**Ephesians 6:10 NAU** - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."  
There are great unseen forces at war against us. Paul wants us to understand not only the war but also the source of our power as we go to battle. We do not fight in our own power but in the strength of His might.
4. In **11-12** Paul describes the chief enemy in this war—the devil and his minions.  
**Ephesians 6:11 NAU** - "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
5. God has equipped His people to stand against this foe. He has provided powerful armor to equip us for the war.  
**Ephesians 6:13 NAU** - "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."  
We have truth to free us and equip us to march into battle.  
We have righteousness as our breastplate.  
We have the Gospel to prepare our feet for the field of duty  
We have faith as our great shield to ward off Satan's fiery arrows  
We have the hope of glory as a helmet to guard our mind  
And we have a mighty, two-edged sword as our only weapon against this mighty foe.
6. But none of our armor is of any use without the power of God. We must pray.  
William Gurnall: "You have now, Christian, the armour of God; but take heed thou forgettest not to engage the God of this armour by humble prayer for your assistance, lest for all this you be worsted in the fight. He that gives you the arms, can only teach you to use them, and enable you to overcome by their use. The Christian armour will rust except it be furnished and scoured with the oil of prayers."
7. Prayer is an essential to the life of the Christian. Paul now sets before us this important aspect of the Christian warfare.  
**Ephesians 6:18 NAU** - "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit"

8. Prayer is not technically a part of our armor and Paul is not here adding another weapon. And yet, along with the Word of God it is one of our greatest weapons - a mighty weapon. Like the Sword of the Spirit it is both defensive and offensive.
  9. The exact translation is difficult. The word "pray" is a participle as reflected in the ESV ("praying at all times in the Spirit") but it doesn't give us the exact point of connection. Presumably we can take it back to the word "therefore" in **Verse 14**.  
At times a participle can carry the weight of an imperative which is reflected in the NASB. This also seems to fit well with Paul's emphasis. We cannot over emphasize the importance of prayer in the Christian life. If we understand anything of the warfare we must understand how essential prayer is. It is not optional. It is essential.
  10. I just quoted William Gurnall. In 1662 he wrote an amazing work on the Christian warfare based on these 11 verses of Ephesians 6. It was titled *The Christian in Complete Armor*. It was almost 1300 pages in length, 300 of which dealt with this subject of prayer—almost one fourth of the book.
  11. This morning I want us to begin to look at the all-important subject of prayer. We'll use the text of God's Word to direct us. Notice Paul uses the word "all" four times. We must pray with "all prayer" at "all times" with "all perseverance" for "all the saints."
- I. We are to pray always "with all prayer" - every type of prayer
- A. Paul declares with all "prayer" and "petition" – the word is most often translated "supplication" which is how the NASB translates it in **Phil. 4:6**
    1. Some hold that the two words, "prayer and supplication" are used interchangeably—that Paul is simply using the different words to add intensity to the statement. It is true that sometimes they seem to be synonymous terms.  
**Psalms 86:6 NAU** - "Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; And give heed to the voice of my supplications!"
    2. These two words are not exactly the same. Supplications are requests or entreaties before God. We petition God for our needs and the needs of others.
    3. All supplication is prayer but the reverse is not necessarily true—all prayer is not supplication.
  - B. Paul is saying we must pray with all the various types of prayer - ACTS
    1. Prayers of adoration, praise and worship - We must maintain a constant life of extolling God
      - a. Only by drawing near to God does He stand as our sure defense  
**James 4:7-8 NAU** - "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and -he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."
      - b. The Psalms are a never-ending supply of prayers of praise  
**Psalm 3:3 NAU** - "But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head."  
**Psalm 8:1 NAU** - "O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!"

**Psalm 18:1-3 NAU** - "I love You, O LORD, my strength." <sup>2</sup>  
 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My  
 God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn  
 of my salvation, my stronghold. <sup>3</sup> I call upon the LORD, who  
 is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."

2. Prayers of confession – unconfessed sin leaves us in a spiritually weakened condition and drives a wedge in our fellowship with Christ.  
**Psalm 51:2-4 NAU** - "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight"
3. Prayers of thanksgiving – "in everything give thanks" – The thankful heart is a heart enflamed with the glory of Christ.  
**Psalm 9:1-2 NAU** - "I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. <sup>2</sup> I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High."  
**Psalm 69:30 NAU** - " I will praise the name of God with song And magnify Him with thanksgiving."  
**Psalm 95:2-3 NAU** - "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a great God And a great King above all gods,"  
**Psalm 100:4-101:1 NAU** - " Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. <sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations."  
  - a. The prayer of thanksgiving crushes Satan’s temptation to discontentment
  - b. When we praise God for everything we complain about nothing

## II. At all times – on every occasion

- A. During all of life’s situations
  1. Our daily circumstances are constantly changing. We must seek to maintain prayer on every occasion.
  2. This means we pray at home and when away—also at mealtime. Vacations demand particular vigilance. We pray when we have guests at our home and when we don’t.  
 We pray when eating at work, at parties and social events, with friends and with enemies.
  3. Prayer is one of the sure signs of God’s grace within us. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Prayer marks us and defines us  
*Robert Murray M’Cheyne* – “What a man is on his knees before God, that he is – and nothing more.”  
*Martyn Lloyd-Jones* – “There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christians so much as our prayer life.”
  4. Satan knows this all too well. He is poised to attack on every occasion but our prayer life greatly hinders his attack. It is in prayer that we draw near unto God and it is in prayer that Satan flees from us.  
 We must pray during every occasion of life.

- B. We must pray during difficult times and during good times
1. Prayer must be our first response to adversity. Too often it is our last response. We seek every other remedy before seeking God. And most often our remedies are of the carnal sort.  
**Philippians 4:6-7 NAU** - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything (NIV – every situation) by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."  
**1 Peter 5:6-7 NAU** - "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."
  2. It is one thing to recognize our need to pray during times of fiery trial but do we understand the need to pray during times of ease?
  3. Our greatest danger is often during the good times  
 This was the case with Job. His life was greatly blessed. He had a fine family and was wealthy beyond measure—yet he was about to come under intense spiritual warfare.
- C. We must pray in public and in private
1. We need to be committed to corporate prayer
    - a. As we saw with our shield of faith, it was the combined shields of the Roman army that made them most effective.
    - b. We are in this battle together  
 This is why Paul is charging us to pray for all the saints
  2. We must also be committed to private prayer.
    - a. We must maintain regular times of private prayer
    - b. These are special times of communion with our God. Christianity is a relationship. It is a love relationship with the God who loves us with an everlasting love.
    - c. Our armor is the “armor of God” each piece must be adorned with much prayer.
- D. There is another time when prayer is absolutely essential but often neglected. We must pray as we approach the Word of God—when we read, study, or when we prepare to hear it preached.
1. Our loins are girded with truth. We battle with the Sword of the Spirit. Our mighty weapon of the Word of God must be covered in prayer.
  2. Satan’s heresies are always threatening. His subtleties must always be guarded against.  
**Ephesians 4:14 NAU** - "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming"
  3. There are many reasons for the errors that plague the church
    - a. Our human understanding is greatly affected by our fallen condition. Our understanding in this life will always be wanting.
    - b. Far too often we place greater value upon our opinions than upon the Word of God. It is our only authority.
    - c. We must never discount the reality of Satan’s deceptions. It is essential that we pray much.

4. We need the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit  
**Colossians 1:9 NAU** - " For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"
  - a. We need the continual renewing of the mind  
**Romans 12:2 NAU** - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
  - b. Every pastor must bathe his study and his preaching in prayer.
- E. We need to pray that God would guard our hearts from succumbing to temptation
  1. We can see this with the Lord's Prayer  
**Matthew 6:13 KJV** - "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"
  2. We put on the breastplate of righteousness, but this breastplate must be ever empowered by God.  
**Philippians 2:13 NAU** - "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."  
**1 Thessalonians 5:23 NAU** - "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

#### Conclusion:

1. Paul's point is we must make prayer a priority. We need to pray in every situation using every type of prayer. It must consume our life.  
 Luther: As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray."
2. We must not cease to pray for one another. We are in the midst of a terrible war. Satan's attacks here are great—he knows how devastating are the prayers of the faithful saints. In response to Knox's imprecatory prayers, Mary Queen of Scots is reputed to have said: "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe."
3. May we strive to be a praying church. May each of us find great comfort to know that our brethren are praying for us.