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Date: 24 May 2015

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[0:00] We have been spending time in the book of Ephesians, and we're closing out a little piece on the armor of God. So we're in Ephesians 6, verses 10-20 this morning.

We're going to be focusing on verses 18-20. And all along here, we have been learning that we have an enemy, that the devil is real. And though he's already been defeated at the cross, Jesus triumphed over him.

Through his death and resurrection. God put all things under the feet of our King Jesus, including the devil and his demons. Even though that's true, he's still on the run.

He's on the prowl, 1 Peter 5.8. And he's looking to do us ill. Doubt. Distraction. Distortion. Division. Deceptive tactics to destroy. Anyway, in Ephesians 6, verses 10-14, four times we're told to stand.

[1:06] Stand firm. Remember, Ephesians is all about walking. Walk, walk, walk, walk, walk. Walk. Live your life. Walk, walk, walk, walk, walk. Walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel.

Walk, walk, walk. Ephesians 6, 10. Stand. Take a stand. Stand firm against the schemes of our enemy. And God has provided strength for us to stand firm.

This armor. And Paul very intentionally chooses battle imagery. We are in a spiritual guerrilla warfare.

And in order to stand firm, we've got to put the armor on. We've got to put on the belt of truth that Christ is everything. It's all about Him. That's the truth of the matter.

We've got to buckle on the breastplate of righteousness. We've got to call to mind by prayer that yes, my sin has been imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness has been imputed to me.

[2:10] I'm completely forgiven and totally accepted in God's sight. Amen. Amen. I lace up the high top cleats of the Gospel of peace that make me immovable.

God is for me. In Christ. I take up the shield of faith and with it, I intercept and extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one looking to divide us.

He's looking to aim into gaps into our unity. The unity we have in Christ. We've been given this helmet. The helmet of salvation.

And it's God saying to us, you are mine, you are mine, you are mine, you are mine, and when it's on, we say, I am yours. Saved.

Forever. And then finally, we take up that living, lethal, and legendary sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. It's all about Christ.

[3:23] It's all about Christ. I mean, He wielded it. And now we wield it, and we cut to pieces destructive deceptions of the devil. Armor on.

Now, imagine, Woodman's on a Saturday morning. Talk about a war zone. One of the sisters from our church is there.

She's pulled up in her minivan, and she has three kids under four. She gets out of the minivan, and she is decked out in the armor of God from head to toe.

She's pushing that Woodman's cart, kids hanging off at like a jungle gym, and as she's going down the cereal aisle, you see her mouth moving.

You think she's looking for Cheerios. You think she's reading kind of nutritional charts. But you know what she's doing? She's praying. I-94, Wednesday morning, southbound.

[4:27] A middle-aged man squeezed into his Honda Civic. decked out in armor. And as you drive by him, you notice that his lips are moving.

He's on a direct line to heaven. Student walking down the hallway of Tremper High School. Maybe it's not Tremper. Maybe it's Bradford or Indian Trail. Harborside. Lakeview. Maybe it's not high school. Maybe it's middle school. Lance. Washington. Lincoln. Christian Life School. Maybe it's not a school. Maybe you're homeschooled. You're walking down the hallway in your house. But you're a student with your armor on. And if you were to walk by this student, you couldn't help but notice that they're saying something under their breath. And they're not gossiping. They're making supplication. They are asking God for boldness to walk in their school for the glory of Jesus. If you would look at Ephesians 6, 18-20, we read this.

[5:37] 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.

In order for us as Christians of Christ the King Church to stand firm against the devil's scheming, we must pray. We must pray.

There's five points I want you to see this morning. The last four are right out of the text, but here are the five points. First, we must pray with all of our hearts.

Second, we must pray all the time. Third, we must pray all kinds of prayers. Fourth, we must pray with all perseverance. And fifth, we must pray for all the saints.

Why? To experience God's spiritual strengthening so that we can stand firm against the schemes of the devil. United we stand. Let's stand firm.

[6:56] Let's pray with all our hearts. What is prayer? Prayer is not complicated. It's actually very simple.

What prayer is, is simply entrusting your soul to God. Oftentimes, prayer is a verbal communication of our hearts' trust in God.

And it comes in many forms. But what I want you to think about this morning as we get going here is this. Prayer is depending on God.

Prayer is the way we trust God. Prayer is the way that we cry out to God. And so, prayerlessness is independence from God.

It's a lack of trust in God. A lack of ongoing dependence on Him. And if you're like me, I am, I'm tempted to self-sufficiency.

[8:02] My prideful tendency to self-sufficiency will make me prayerless. Because essentially, I'm trusting in myself. So what prayer is, is essentially trusting actively in our God.

Calling out to Him over and over and over again. That little, this first point is pray with all your heart. And if you replace that word pray with trust, it's trust God with all your heart.

Like Proverbs chapter 3, 5 and 6. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And lean not on your own understanding. But in all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths.

Pray to your God with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. Trust Him. Trust Him. As we trust God, what we will find is that God, as we pray, refocuses us.

As we pray, He reframes us. As we pray, He is able to revive us. As we pray, He's able to restrain us. Are you praying?

[9:23] Are you actively trusting God? Are you seeking Him? The second thing I want you to see is we're to pray all the time.

We see that right in this passage. Verse 18. Praying at all times in the Spirit. Praying at all times. Now, we all have regular times of prayer.

I mean, as a church, this morning, we've already prayed multiple times. Our small groups pray every time they get together. Families get together and pray.

If you're a family like mine, we pray for all of our meals. Sometimes it's just rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub, and dive in. But often on mornings, we pray together as a family and we entrust ourselves to God for the day.

It's really simple. And then there's this thing called private prayers. Personally praying to God.

[10:35] Private praying is part of a spiritual wartime mentality. Here's why. We need to pray all the time because the battle is raging all the time. We must be vigilant in our praying.

Personal praying, a vibrant personal prayer life will help you stand firm against the devil.

This morning, I really want to help you with this. I want to get concrete. So here's a suggestion of how to pray throughout your day.

Beginning your day with private prayer. Trusting God from the get-go. Starting your first inclination towards Him. Maybe you pray through the armor.

May you call to mind that first belt of truth that today it's all about Jesus. Jesus. That's who I'm living for. I'm not sure what your beginning of your day is like if you have a calendar on your phone or if you have a calendar or a schedule that you keep pen and paper or if you keep it up in your head and you just know what's going to happen that day.

[11:58] But can I encourage you to start your day this way? Take a couple minutes and pray through your day. Just think about what's going to happen today and you entrust yourself in this day to God.

You're looking to Him. You are laying it before Him. Begin your day with private prayer and then throughout the day pray.

It's kind of like urban warfare. It's kind of like going to house to house. Kind of situation to situation. Appointment to appointment. Phone call to phone call. Email to email.

One after the other. And you're kind of covering everything with prayer. You're laying down prayer cover. Oh God, I got this meeting. I'm about to walk into it.

Lord, I don't know what's going to happen but whatever happens, God, may I be a light for you. May I be wise. May I be gracious. May I be truthful and honest.

[12:59] God, I'm entrusting myself to you now as I walk into this meeting. Or, God, I know this meeting is going to be antagonistic. God, would you help me to respond in such a way that's forgiving and tender and gracious.

God, as you pick up your phone. God, this is going to be a hard phone call. I pray that, Lord, you would help me make this phone call and preserve the unity that you've purchased in Christ. as you're typing out an email.

Oh God, I pray that this email would find this person or these people, that this would be a blessing to them. That it would build, it wouldn't tear down.

God, as my family relaxes this afternoon, would you help us to relax in such a way that honors you? You're just kind of praying from one thing to the next.

Praying at all times. Essentially, you're saying this. Oh God, help me. Help me, help me. Help me, help me. Help me with this. Help me with that. Help me with this. Give me strength. Give me strength. Close of the day.

[14:09] You're laying down on your bed. Thank God for your day. Thank God for what He's done that day. Thank God for His faithfulness to you. Thank God for specific ways He has met you and sustained you.

And then you sleep the sleep of the Beloved. Psalm 4.8 In peace, I will both lie down and sleep because you make me dry inside you. God, I trust you.

Now this is throughout the day, right? What happens when you wake up in the middle of the night? What happens if you can't fall asleep because you're anxious?

Well, you pray. Sometimes you need to sleep with your helmet of salvation on. Reminding yourself again and again that I am yours.

I am yours. God, you're for me. God, make straight these paths. Here's something that happens on a somewhat frequent basis here.

[15:10] God wakes somebody up. God wakes somebody up by putting someone else on their mind at 3 a.m. You awake, awaken, and there's someone on your mind.

You're being prompted by the Spirit of God to pray for them. Maybe you don't know what, but you lay it down. You lay down, cover. Oh God, I pray for this person right now.

I don't know why. I don't know the circumstances, but God, would you strengthen them? Would you give them what they need? Help them. So regular times of prayer. We're to pray all the time.

Now, could you imagine us as a church if we're praying more and more frequently like that? Do you know what happens? God moves. I'm not sure if you noticed this, but there's a little prepositional phrase that we're to pray all the time in the Spirit.

Did you guys notice that in verse 18? In the Spirit. He's not speaking of praying in tongues. It's not what he's talking about there.

[16:20] What he's talking about is this. Paul is saying pray all the time with prayers that are prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit. Prayers that are directed by the third person of the Trinity.

Prayers that are being prompted by God living in you and seeking to unite us together as a church. Pray in the Spirit.

These are upwards and outwards prayers. Prayers that are seeking to glorify Christ. Prayers that are seeking good for others. Here's some examples of prayers not in the Spirit.

Ready? Lord, give me a ton of money so that I can get a ton of stuff. Amen! Amen! It's not of the Spirit. It's of the flesh.

Lord, keep my wife from finding out about about my secret. It's not of the Spirit. It's of the flesh.

Lord, would you just bail me out this one last time and I'll give you anything!

[17:31] It's not of the Spirit. Here's examples of praying in the Spirit.

Lord, I confess. I confess. I spoke in anger. I confess.

God, help me. I need to love this person. Lead me. Strengthen me. Lord, provide wisdom for my son. Provide wisdom for my wife, for my husband, my friend.

God, unite us as a church. If your praying is marked by the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

If your praying is marked by the fruit of the Spirit, you know what? You're praying in the Spirit.

You're praying in prayers prompted and guided by the Spirit of God.

You know what? Praying in the Spirit is another way of saying we're depending on our God. our prayers are dependent on God. So the question we will need to ask is this.

[18:36] Are you praying with greater and greater frequency? Praying all times. And are you praying in the Spirit? Are your prayers prompted and guided by the Spirit of God?

When we pray like that, God builds. God unites. He pours out His Spirit in greater, greater measure. So, we're to pray all the time in the Spirit.

The third point is we're to pray all kinds of prayers. Do you know who Bubba Gump is? from the movie Forrest Gump? There's this one scene in the movie where Bubba is listing out the various kinds of shrimp and ways to prepare shrimp.

You know what I'm talking about. Barbecue shrimp, popcorn shrimp, shrimp stir fry, and he goes on and on and on for like a minute.

There are all kinds of prayers and ways to pray. Prayers of adoration where we adore our God. Prayers of thanksgiving. We give thanks.

[19:48] Prayers of lament where we pour out our hearts. That can get kind of messy and uncomfortable. But we're being honest with God. Prayers of confession.

Prayers of petition. Prayers of supplication. Then there are corporate prayers. There are small group prayers. There are family prayers. Private prayers. There are standing up prayers. There are sitting down prayers.

There are kneeling prayers. There are hands raised prayers. There are hands folded prayers.

There are closed eye prayers. And then there's the open eye prayer.

Do you know what I'm talking about? There are shouted prayers. And there are sung prayers.

There are whispered prayers.

And of course, there are the unspoken prayers. What all these prayers have in common is communicating one's soul's dependence on God.

[20:47] If you're born again, you're going to want to pray. The Spirit of God in you is compelling you to pray. Cry out, Abba, Father.

Romans chapter 8. There are different kinds of prayers for different seasons of life and different states of souls. That's what makes the Psalms so sweet to Christians.

The Psalms are a collection of prayers. A variety of prayers. All aimed at God. So what we see here in Ephesians 6 is this.

Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep the Lord with all perseverance making supplication. So we're to pray all kinds of prayers, but there's one kind of prayer Paul kind of narrows in on.

And that's that word supplication. Do you guys use the word supplication every day? What is this supplication? Well, the key word in it, it's the word supply.

[21:53] See the words supply and supplication? And so when we make supplication for one another, we're asking God to supply a need. We're asking God to meet a need.

To bring comfort or courage or clarity. And so there are many different kinds of prayers and many different ways to pray, but what we're being exhorted to here is to make supplication for one another.

To make supplication for yourself, to make supplication for others. To ask God to meet needs. I want to help you this morning in a way to make supplication for yourself and others.

So I want to show you a way to pray that combines both praying and reading your Bible. And in order to do that, I need you to turn to Psalm 86.

So would you turn there please? What I'm about to show you is, the fancy name is Prayerful Meditation of Scripture. I call it making David's prayer my own.

[23:02] So if you turn to Psalm 86, I want to show you a way to make supplication for yourself that combines both reading your Bible and praying.

And so what we'll essentially do is, we'll swing the sword of the Spirit by praying in the Spirit. Is everybody in Psalm 86?

There's the title, Great is Your Steadfast Love. And then it says, A Prayer of David. Do you see that? Here's what you need to do in your mind. You need to cross out David and put in your name. So what we're going to do here is make a prayer of David into a prayer of Mike or a prayer of Ginny or a prayer of Katie or a prayer of Jasmine or Matt.

So that's what we're going to do here. Another way to think about it is this. Think about this prayer as a jacket that David is wearing. And what we're going to do is we're going to take off this jacket of Psalm 86 off David and we're going to put our own body into it.

[24:04] We're going to make it our own. This is going to become ours. And so I'm just going to show you a way to do this in order to equip you and serve you and how to make supplication for yourself.

You ready? Here's all it is. You start reading. Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me for I am poor and needy.

And then you pray. God, I am poor and needy. I can't get through today. I'm dependent on you. Apart from you, I can do nothing. You have the strength that I need to do. Without you, I'm vulnerable. Without you, I'm unable.

I'm limited. I'm a creature. I need your help. It goes on to say, preserve my life for I'm godly, savior, servant, who trusts in you. You are my God.

[25:01] There's the helmet of salvation. You are my God. I belong to you. I'm yours. Verse 4, gladden the soul of your servant for to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

O God, make my soul happy today. And you know where I find happiness? I find my happiness in Christ that he's imputed his righteousness to me. Praise be to God.

Verse 8, there is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. Jesus, it's all about you.

You alone are God. And so here we are. Within one minute, we have offered ourselves to the Lord, made supplication for ourselves, using Scripture, prayers that are already in our Bibles.

It's a very satisfying, helpful way to make supplication for yourself. And then making supplication for others. In the book of Ephesians alone, in Ephesians chapter 1, in Ephesians chapter 3, there are prayers Paul prays for this Ephesian church.

[26:15] And then in Colossians chapter 1, there's another prayer. He prays for the Colossian church. And you know what he's praying for? He

prays for strength for these churches.

And so when it comes to praying for one another, let's pray that God would strengthen us with his might. We can pray these prayers. I'm guessing some of it, I've prayed Ephesians 3 for many of you, that God would, by his Spirit, strengthen your inner man, that Christ would dwell in your heart by faith, that you would know the love of God in Christ Jesus and you would be filled with the fullness of God.

What a joy it is to pray that to each other. So let me ask you a question. Are you praying all kinds of prayers? Are you making supplication for yourself and others?

Are you swinging the sword of the Spirit by praying in the Spirit? Fourth point, we are to pray with all perseverance.

We are to pray with all perseverance. We read this in verse 18. Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication, to that end, keep alert with all perseverance.

[27:45] To that end, praying, making supplication. To that end, persevere. Stay alert.

That word, those words, keep alert, mean to be watchful. In Mark 14, it's very interesting. This is the same thing Jesus tells His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Stay awake. Keep alert. Pray that you might not be led into temptation. The Spirit's willing, but the flesh is weak. Stay awake. Keep alert.

Be watchful. I have this thing, I call it PASTAR. P-A-S-T-A-R. It's like radar. It's, you become aware of something.

There's a blip that comes up and you're like, okay, I need to pray for that. I need to be aware of that. I need to maybe bring God's Word to bear on that for someone.

[28:47] but it's a watchfulness and PASTAR is not limited to PASTAR's. If you're a Christian, you've got PASTAR. Watchfulness.

Being aware of others. Knowing other people's needs. Being alert against the schemes of the devil. But what we're told here is that we're to keep alert with all perseverance.

It's telling us how we are to stay awake. How we are to keep alert. Persevering prayer protects us from falling prey to the devil.

Persevering prayer protects us from falling prey to the devil. So we pray aware and we persevere in our praying. It does take effort.

It does take concentration. It does take ongoing dependence. But here's the effect. God uses it to build us. Help us to trust Him.

[29:52] So we persevere in our praying for each other. When someone, a couple's going through a hard spot in their marriage, we persevere in praying for them. Pray it all the way through.

We pray in a persevering way for people with hardened hearts. We pray it all the way through. We pray. We ask. I'm going for provisions over and over and over again.

We persevere. When I was in high school, I went on a short-term mission trip to the Dominican Republic. And it turns out when we got there, I didn't know this until I got there.

And it was the thing that stuck. There was a man who had been praying for 10 years that God would send a team to help build an orphanage because there was a need to care for orphans in Santa Domingo.

And lo and behold, here I am, a junior in high school. I show up and I meet this man who's been praying, persevering in his prayers for 10 years.

[30:57] Nelson Medina. It struck me. Persevering. What persevering prayers can reveal is our motives.

It can show us why we're really praying. They can purify. What persevering prayer also produces is unity. When we're able to say to one another, brother, I'm praying for you.

I'm in it with you. I'm praying daily for you regarding this. Over two years, brother, I'm praying for you. Stay in time, brother.

I'm praying. Are you praying? Are you watchful in your prayers? Are you persevering in your prayers? The last thing, last point is we are to pray for all the saints.

We must pray for each other. We see that at the end of verse 18, making supplication for all the saints. Now, I don't know about you what your experience is, but there can be a lack of meaningful prayer when we gather together, especially in our small groups.

[32:11] And this lack is not a lack of willingness to pray for each other. It's a lack of willingness to share our lives with each other. Not wanting to be fully honest.

Not willing to bring struggles. Have you ever been in a small group when the prayer, time to pray at the end, leader asks me, anybody have any prayer requests? And there's someone who says, everybody, would you pray?

Would you pray for my great aunt? She's got just horrific breath, and it's just dividing the family. It's chewing us up. Pray, move in her heart that she would brush her teeth.

Lord, please! So you're hearing that, and it doesn't sit. It's dissatisfying. Because everybody in the room knows that there are things that this person's dealing with that are more significant and closer to home than what they're sharing.

We can be unwilling to share. And there is a group of people ready and eager to pray. We've been all in that situation, haven't we?

[33:30] Having something on our hearts to share, but reluctant, embarrassed, maybe too prideful. We need to humble ourselves in order to effectively pray for each other.

In order to know each other well, we've got to be willing to open our lives up to one another. God will unite us as we humble ourselves and pray meaningfully for one another.

So when we talk about praying for all the saints, there's a step where we need to be willing to be prayed for. We need to entrust ourselves to one another and to God.

We've been sending out a weekly prayer update as a church, usually on Tuesdays, and the purpose of it is really to be praying for one another, to build each other up, to make supplication for one another, to know what's going on in each other's lives.

It's just a little way to do that. I'm encouraging you to take advantage of it. In verses 19 and 20, Paul specifically asks for prayer and it's very instructive.

[34:48] What's most interesting is what he asks for. And so let me just say this. Do you remember Paul is writing in prison, house arrest, he's writing in Rome, he's literally chained to a Roman soldier.

That's verse 20 while you read an ambassador in chains. And it's very interesting what he requests. He doesn't ask for comfort.

He asks for boldness. Do you know what he was waiting for? He was waiting to go before Caesar to give reason for the hope that was in him.

And so he prays, he asks the Ephesians, he does this with Colossians, he does it across all of his letters to ask people to pray that he would have boldness to proclaim to the powers that be that Christ is risen and that Christ is reigning and that Christ is calling all to him in repentance.

He prays for boldness because he's mission-minded. He asks for boldness because he's got a spiritual wartime mentality.

[36:08] If the apostle is willing to ask for prayer, we must too. So are we wise enough to know our own need for God's strength?

Are we humble enough to ask our friends to pray for us? To pray for boldness? So here are two questions.

Friends, when was the last time you asked another Christian to pray for something that was near to your heart? In other words, when was the last time you asked someone to pray for something that was risky for you?

When was the last time you asked another Christian to pray for boldness for you? To witness? Paul is modeling something for us here.

Not only does he model praying for the saints, Ephesians 1, Ephesians 3, he's modeling asking for prayer from the saints to be strengthened, to stand firm.

[37:22] I'd like to ask you all on behalf of Samir and Daniel, would you be praying for us? We're not apostles, we're just elders. Would you pray for us?

That we be bold, wise, gracious, focused, mission-minded. In conclusion, we're to pray with all of our heart, we're to pray all the time, we're to pray all kinds of prayers, specifically supplication, we're to pray with perseverance all the way through, we're to pray for all the saints, we're to ask for prayer.

But I want to close by pointing you to Ephesians 3, verses 19-20. Actually, 20. Paul just prayed for the Ephesians, and he says this, 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 the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever.

Our God is able our God is mighty. Our God is powerful. And so we stand firm against the schemes of the devil by praying together.

We must pray. And it's united that we stand. Let me pray for that. God in heaven, would you help us to pray?

[39:00] Would you help us to express our dependence on you and our interdependence with each other by praying more and more? God, I pray that you'd give us courage in opening our lives with one another, that we would be willing to entrust ourselves in such a way that we would be praying more and more meaningfully for one another.

God, we know that the enemy of our souls does not want us praying, does not want us depending on you. So God, would you give us a heart to pray more and more for the name of Jesus?

Amen. Amen.