

Standing Firm on Your Knees

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[0 : 0 0] I continue this transformation by targeting this transformation by targeting this Ephesians chapter 6 As we're continuing in our armor of God study You ought to be encouraged tonight just with the music we've already been singing, right?

The battle belongs to the Lord. There's victory in Jesus. We're fighting a battle that He's already won. That's some pretty awesome truth that we can claim and rest in as believers.

Amen? And so what we've been doing, most of you have been with us throughout the summer, and what we've been doing is looking at the armor of God. And I honestly thought, I'm not really trying to get a reaction out of you, just kind of telling you where we are, I thought this weekend was going to be it, and it's not.

So we're actually going to continue a little longer. I hope you're not too disappointed by that. So no fear, we're not finishing it up tonight. Here's what we've looked at thus far, if you are new with us.

The very first week, we kind of did an overview of what the Bible teaches about spiritual warfare, about evil spiritual powers and things of that nature. If you didn't get that, you've got to start there because that's foundational.

[1 : 5 8] Then we talked about the belt of truth. Each week, just kind of taking one piece of the armor and breaking it down. The belt of truth, which is the gospel. The breastplate of righteousness, which is the righteousness that we have in Jesus.

Our shoes, that is our security, the confidence we have because we have peace with God. The shield of faith that allows us to keep marching forward.

The helmet of salvation, which is the future salvation that we are promised in Jesus. And then lastly, we talked about the sword, that is the word of God, the sword of the spirit, which is our offensive weapon to be able to attack and to be able to dissect these deceitful schemes.

Well, we're finished with the pieces of the armor, but we're not finished with a very important part of what Paul talks about in terms of the spiritual war that we're in.

And that's what we're going to focus on tonight in verse 18. And so, invite you, if you would, to please stand as we honor the reading of God's word. And we'll do as we've done each week. We'll start with verse 10 and then read down to the verse that we're focusing on this evening.

[3 : 0 9] So Paul says, Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers and authorities and cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, you should take up the whole armor of God that you'll be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth.

Put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet, 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 arrows or darts of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And then here's our focal verse this evening. There's no way we could leave verse 18 out.

Amen? It's so important. So let's pray together, and let's ask God once again to teach us from his word. Father, thank you once again for all throughout this summer, the things that you've been teaching us through this passage.

[4 : 42] And we pray tonight that you once again, by your Spirit, would come and speak to us and convict but also encourage, open our eyes to see, Lord, this vision, this reality of spiritual war that we're in.

And we seek to glorify Jesus in this moment, and we pray it in his name. And God's people said, amen. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. Save the wheat. Help the fleet.

That was just one of the many slogans used by the U.S. government during World War I. And they did that to encourage Americans to adjust to a wartime mentality.

You see, one of the greatest challenges that American soldiers in World War I faced was being well-fed during the war. In fact, Napoleon is said to have said this, quote, an army marches on its stomach.

What he meant by that is food is what fuels an army to be successful, right? And believing that to be true, the U.S. government wanted to keep our soldiers marching strong.

[5 : 55] Soon after the war began, the U.S. Food Administration was established, and they tried to regulate food through a massive informational campaign.

Their goal, listen very closely, their goal was to help Americans connect their eating habits with supporting the troops on the front lines.

And in order to make this connection, they came up with all kinds of slogans and distributed them everywhere. Here's just a few. Save the wheat.

Help the fleet. Food will win the war. Food is ammunition. Don't waste it.

Be patriotic. Sign your country's pledge to save food. Save sugar for the man who fights.

[6 : 54] And on and on and on. All kinds of these slogans were distributed everywhere. In fact, one writer said this, quote, Americans were encouraged to substitute the beef they didn't eat for a rifle they couldn't carry.

You see, the government wanted Americans to see food conservation not as an inconvenience, but as a public service.

Now, not everybody was convinced that this campaign would work. In fact, Herbert Hoover, who was the head of the U.S. Food Administration that was doing this campaign, even said this, quote, We are patriots enough to stand up for the right music, to float the flag, and to yell when the soldiers go by.

We are even patriots enough to offer our lives for our country. But are we patriots enough to stand without flinching when our pockets and appetites are touched?

We shall see. Close quote. Was that campaign successful? It absolutely was.

[8 : 10] Americans adopted new recipes that they could make without sugar or wheat or meat. And as a result of doing that, as a result of adapting their behaviors, food was distributed to U.S. soldiers on the front lines who ate hearty portions of meals.

In fact, Faith Family, U.S. troops in World War I were better fed than any other nation in the war. In fact, many other nation soldiers suffered with starvation.

But ours was the most fed. Why? Because listen, listen. At kitchen tables all across America, people adjusted to a wartime mentality.

Now, every single one of us has experienced something like that before. It may not be related to a war, but here's what I mean.

Like, zone in here. We have all experienced a time when our mindset and our behaviors changed because we found ourselves in a serious situation.

[9 : 25] Are you with me? Let me give you a few examples. When the economy tanks or if you have a financial crisis, what happens? Your spending habits change, right?

Or if you go through a medical emergency or you have some type of a health crisis, what happens? Your eating habits or your lifestyle changes.

If you go through some type of a relational crisis, your communication patterns will change. You may become more intentional. By the way, the same thing happens spiritually. People will go through a personal crisis and they wake up to their need for God.

Amen? Is everybody with me? Come on. Everybody knows this. You know that serious situations call for immediate action. Serious situations, they change our behavior.

They make us act in different ways. Could it be? Could it be? Could it be? And I think it is this, that our lack of constant prayer is due to our disconnect from spiritual war.

[10 : 39] That was a great place for an amen. And I don't know how you missed that, but I'll give you another try. Here it is. Our lack of constant prayer is because we live with a disconnect from spiritual war.

Amen. And there you go. Nice job, faith family, even though I had to ask for it. Listen, that's exactly the connection that the Apostle Paul makes here in Ephesians chapter 6.

Let me show it to you. If you go back to the very beginning in verse 10, notice what Paul says. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God so we're in this war that you'll be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

We do not wrestle, that is, fight, battle against flesh and blood, but rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over the present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

In other words, we're at war, right? Every day we're at war. I'm just going to keep trying. Every day we're in a battle. And then Paul takes that.

[11 : 42] I'll get you eventually. Then tells us this in verse 18. Praying at all times in the Spirit.

In other words, notice the perspective of prayer here. That Paul does something that is so easy for us to miss. That is, he mentions prayer in the context of spiritual war.

Everybody sees that in the text. He mentions prayer in the context of spiritual war. In fact, the whole, I mean, these last, what, seven, eight weeks, we've been talking about the armor of God and spiritual warfare and the evil spiritual powers that we battle with.

And in all of that, Paul calls us to prayer. And so here's what I think this means. Notice on the screen. We will not understand the necessity of prayer until we realize the reality of war.

We will not understand. I don't think it's possible for us to understand the necessity of prayer until we realize the reality of war.

[12 : 54] Or let me say it this way. Just as Americans needed to have a wartime mentality with how they ate their food, Christians need to have a wartime mentality with how we pray.

We had to, as Americans, adjust our behavior. Why? We're in a war. And Paul is saying we need to adjust our thinking about prayer.

Why? Because we're in a war. And this is not the only passage that deals with the Christian life that way, that describes it this way. We've looked at several of these verses throughout the series.

2 Timothy 4, 7. I have fought the good. There you go, faith family. 2 Corinthians 10, 3 through 4. For though we walk in the flesh, we're not waging war according to the flesh.

No, our weapons of warfare are not a flesh, but are of divine power and destroy strongholds. Look at Jude 3. It says, listen, beloved.

[13 : 59] I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, but I had to write to you about something else. I found it necessary to write appealing to you to do what? Contend, fight, battle for the faith.

1 Peter 5, 8. Be sober-minded, be watchful, because you have an adversary. You have an enemy. The devil that prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. This one we've mentioned several times.

Revelation 12, 17. Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Faith family, that's you. You're followers of Christ. We're the church of God. And we are at war. If it wouldn't be weird or awkward, I'd get down on my knees and beg you tonight that if you take anything from this series, if you take anything away from it, at least take this away from it, the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground.

The Christian life is a battleground. That's just so obvious biblically. Not a playground. And yet, I'm convinced that I and many of us don't think about life this way.

[15 : 23] It's why we're shocked with suffering. We're surprised by trials and conflict. And people let us down. And there's division everywhere. There's daily frustrations.

Everywhere we look around us, things are not how they ought to be. It's why we often show in our priorities a very casual approach to spiritual things.

More concerned about making money than advancing missions. More concerned about how much playtime we get rather than how much prayer time we have. More consumed with our kids' schedule than we are the study of Scripture.

In other words, listen, I'm just as convicted as you are. We don't think about this life every day as a war. But people who do have a wartime mentality are alert.

They're armed. They're mindful constantly of the enemy. They plan differently. They prioritize differently. My guess is, and maybe not as much now after this series, but if I had asked you maybe now or a few weeks ago, what is the greatest threat in life you face?

[16 : 35] Some would say the economy. Some would say China. Some or some other nation. Some would say it's a particular individual or a situation. But rarely, faith family, are you with me?

Rarely is our first answer evil spiritual forces. What's your biggest threat? What's your biggest battle? It's almost always fleshly and not spiritual because we haven't adopted a wartime mentality.

And this is the point I'm making here. Actually, it's the point Paul's making. Until we change our perspective, we're not going to understand the priority of prayer. That prayer is mentioned here in the context of warfare.

That means we must change our perspective of prayer and its role in our life. Notice the connection again here in Ephesians 6.

Beginning in verse 17, this is coming down to the end of the list of armor that we've gone through. And take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

[17 : 44] Everybody say this with me. Pray-ing. Everybody just say ing. One more time. I just wanted to make you do that, all right? Pray-ing.

A little bit of English class. That's a participle. That's a participle. What does that mean grammatically? Listen. Prayer, praying, is how the armor of God gets applied.

It's like you got all these, this piece of armor, this piece of armor, this piece of armor, participle. Praying in the Spirit. That is the way in which we take all these pieces of armor and apply them is prayer.

You could say it this way, it's impossible to use the armor of God without prayer. William Cooper said it this way in just a beautiful poem.

He writes, restraining prayer, we cease to fight. Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright. And Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.

[19 : 03] Amen and amen and amen and amen. Restraining prayer, we cease to fight. It's prayer that keeps the Christian's armor bright.

In fact, according to Jesus, it is impossible, it's impossible to separate the mission that we're on to the prayer we've been given.

The mission that we're on and the opportunity of prayer that we've been given. Look at what Jesus says here in John chapter 15, verse 16. Can you tell I'm fired up? I'm a little fired up, right?

I think this may be the most important sermon on prayer that I've ever preached. And I have preached through the Lord's Prayer and whatever. Anyways, John 15, 16. You did not choose me, but I chose you.

And I appointed you that you should what? Go. So you see the mission there. Go and bear fruit. And that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the Father in my name.

[20 : 09] What is that? Prayer. Whatever you ask in the Father's name, and by name, He may give it to you. In other words, listen, listen. Why will the Father give the disciples what they ask for?

Answer, to complete the mission. To complete the mission. Meaning, listen, you won't have what you need to fulfill the mission.

Insert armor of God. You won't have what you need to fulfill the mission if you don't ask the Father for what you need. Is everybody tracking with me? You can't separate the two. So there's actually no way I can actually apply the armor of God without prayer.

In fact, the grammar here in John 15 even implies that the reason we were given the mission is so that we would pray.

That the whole reason He gave us this mission is at least in part that His people would be in communion with Him. So if you've zoned out, what do you do? Listen, listen to me.

[21 : 15] Listen. If all we think about prayer is that, because this is all the common, it's talking to God, it's making requests, it's interceding for my needs or the needs of others.

Listen. Prayer is those things, but if that's all we think prayer is, without putting those things in the context of a wartime mission, your prayer or your view of prayer is shallow at best and unbiblical at worst.

You can't separate prayer from the mission and you can't apply the armor of God without prayer. Prayer is, notice this here on the screen, prayer is the soldier's supplication to our superior.

And by the way, our superior isn't an angry drill sergeant. He's a loving heavenly Father who delights to give you what you need for the mission.

And we have the opportunity to pray to God. Prayer is mediation for the mission. John Piper writes it this way that I think really kind of summarizes this well.

[22 : 36] Quote, Life is war. That's not all it is, but it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth.

Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness.

It's not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it, listen, a domestic intercom to call the man upstairs for more comfort.

God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the kingdom of Christ advances in the world.

Amen and amen and amen. Faith family, listen, what Americans did in World War I with food is what we must do as Christians with prayer.

[23 : 47] Adopt a wartime mentality. And when we take on that paradigm, then it actually makes sense to the rest of what Paul says in verse 18.

Let's look at it. 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.

So here it is. When we adopt this wartime mentality, and I don't know how we can't in light of the Bible, prayer takes on a whole new practice. You with me?

Like, oh my goodness, when I begin to realize that I'm daily in a war, my behaviors change. And that means my practice of prayer changes. It's what I said at the very beginning of the sermon, that the seriousness of a situation calls for immediate action, right?

A health crisis. Oh my gosh, I gotta change my eating habits. This is important. Same way, oh my goodness, I'm in a spiritual war. That means I need to change my prayer habits because this is serious.

[24 : 54] And that makes sense out of everything Paul says here in that verse. Number one, pray frequently. Pray frequently. Paul says, pray at all times.

You say, what does that mean? Let me translate that for you. Pray at all times. I went to seminary for this stuff, right? So, it means pray at all times.

Luke 21, 36, Jesus tells the disciples to watch and pray always. Acts 6, 4, the apostles gave themselves continually to prayer.

Look at Romans 12, 12. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be what? Constant in prayer. Look at this in Colossians. Continue what?

Steadfastly in prayer, being watchful with thanksgiving. Look at this verse here in 1 Thessalonians. Let's just say the whole thing together. Pray without ceasing.

[25 : 58] In other words, the idea here is consistency. Okay? Come on. Everybody say, preach preacher. Preach preacher. Come on. Here we go. Look at it. Look right here. It's less about having a prayer time and more about having a prayer life.

That's what this means. It's not about having a prayer time. It's great if you have a prayer time. It's talking about having a prayer life. Like a life of constant prayer which we would do when we realize we're in war.

Of course it makes sense to pray at all times because we're in the midst of a battle. At this point, prayer would become a constant practice, not a last resort. Oh, mercy.

Did I just say that? Yeah, I did. Like you realize that we're in a war. Now all of a sudden it's not a last resort. It's a constant need. And there is not a single moment of our day when a prayer can't rise.

That's why Paul says this next thing. Not only pray frequently but pray with variety. The next phrase in the verse is to pray at all times with all prayer.

[27 : 09] What do you mean all prayer? And supplication just means petitions. What does Paul mean by all prayer? He means all kinds of prayer.

Pray at all times with all kinds of prayer. Are you with me? There's all different kinds of ways that we can pray. We can pray in public. We can pray in private.

We can pray verbal or silent. Planned or unplanned. Written. Spontaneous. We can make requests. We can give thanks. We can make confession. We can offer up praise to God.

We can kneel. We can lie down. We can lift our hands. We can use songs. We can use poetry. We can use scripture. We can use the Lord's prayer. We can pray on walks. We can pray in our car.

Preferably not with your eyes closed. But pray for your needs. You can pray for the needs of others. Verse 18. Notice what Paul says. Keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints.

[28 : 09] Oh and by the way while you're praying Paul says if you could pray for me. If you could pray for me that the words would be given to me in the opening of my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

Well that's a pastor asking his people pray for me because I don't want to shut up about Jesus. I don't want to shut up about the gospel. So just pray that no matter how many fiery trials come I'll just keep preaching Jesus.

There's so many ways we can pray. Right? So my point is there's so many ways that we can pray and we should utilize all of them.

You shouldn't have just one bullet in the gun. Like you should cultivate lots of different ways that you can pray all the time.

Why? Because you're at war. Thirdly is pray faithfully. Pray frequently with variety and pray faithfully. What's the next phrase in the verse?

[29 : 11] Keep alert with perseverance. Keep alert with perseverance. Now I don't know if you know this but sometimes battles go on for a very long time.

Too long as far as I'm concerned yet. Ditto. Right? Yeah. Way too long as far as most of us are concerned. So what is important? What is critical?

If we're in a battle that never seems to end what are the two things you need to avoid? Losing focus. Be alert. Losing comfort and giving up perseverance.

Do you see? Let me tell you a story about Monica. It's a true story about a woman named Monica. She was married to a very, very difficult man by the name of Pat.

Not Pat Lavor though I'm sure he's a very difficult man. But no, it's not that Pat. It's not that Pat. This Pat was an atheist and he had an explosive temper.

[30 : 13] However, Monica endured all kinds of hardship with that man. But the greatest challenge that she had wasn't with her husband, it was with her son.

Her son was brilliant but he was rebellious. And like his dad, he wanted nothing to do with the Christian faith. He chose a life of pleasure, intellectual arrogance, and he even got into heresy.

He would frequently mock his mother because of her faith in Christ. But Monica refused to abandon her son. Listen, listen, everybody right here.

For 17 years, 17 years, Monica prayed for her son.

She followed him from city to city not to control him, but she just wanted to be where he was so she could be praying for him. She wept, she fasted, and she waited on God.

[31 : 19] And then one day her prayers were answered. Her son, by the name of Augustine, came to faith in Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest theological minds the church has ever been given. What is the point? It is not pray that your children will become Augustine.

It is never stop praying. Never stop praying. For 17 years that woman prayed.

And God answered her prayer. Pray frequently. Pray with variety. Pray faithfully, alert, and not giving up.

And lastly, pray for vitality. Pray for vitality. The command in Ephesians 6 is what? The ultimate command is be strong in the Lord or to stand firm.

[32 : 22] That is the whole command. It is mentioned multiple times in this section. That is the ultimate thing we are to do. And we need to make the connection that prayer, the participle, the ing, is the way in which we get strength.

Look at, Jesus says this, look at Luke 18 verse 1. And Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought, what? Always to pray and not do what?

Not lose heart. Or a translation will even say grow faint. In other words, faith family, listen, you're either standing firm or falling down.

Right? You're either standing strong or you're losing heart. Well, the one who stands firm is the one who prays. Jesus clearly says that, that they ought always to pray so that they wouldn't lose heart.

Probably the best example where you really see this in the life of Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane. Look at Luke 22 and verse 42. This is so, so important.

[33 : 33] And Jesus is praying. You talk about being in a war? Imagine about to go to the cross. And Jesus prays, Father, if you're willing, remove this cup from me, but nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

And what happened through Jesus' prayer? There appeared to him, what? An angel, a spiritual being from heaven doing what?

Strengthening. How did Jesus get strength in his weakest moment before going to the greatest war, namely the cross?

He prayed. And being in agony, he prayed even more earnestly. And sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he arose from, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping.

And they were sleeping because of sorrow. And he said to them, Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

[34 : 42] Isn't this a clear picture here? Look, Jesus is in a war. He's very aware of it. It's about to kill him before the cross.

It's so agonizing. And where does he get his strength? Through prayer. The disciples, on the other hand, let sorrow make them sleep.

So, the choice really is before us. We either pray and find strength, or we not pray and go to sleep. And last time I checked, that's not a good thing to do in war.

I don't really think you want to be asleep on the battlefield. Amen? So, does this, come on, come on. Do y'all understand, does this all make sense? Like, when you adopt a wartime mentality, oh my goodness, we're in a spiritual war, not against flesh and blood, but powers and principalities and evil spiritual forces.

So, how do I apply all this armor? Through praying. How? Frequently, with variety, faithfully, and so that I'll be strong in the Lord.

[35 : 54] How in the world would you ever think you could possibly utilize the armor of God without prayer? We must adopt a wartime mindset.

And when we do, our perspective of prayer will change, our practice of prayer will change, but then there's a very another important part here that Paul mentioned. Some of you have been waiting for me to address this.

What does this mean? Praying at all times in the Spirit. I know what a lot of people think that means. In fact, I bet you, you've heard people take that out of context a hundred times.

I've heard so many people in denominations say that this means speaking in tongues. That praying in the Spirit is to speak in tongues, which of course, there's no biblical basis for that whatsoever in Ephesians 6.

That's not even the context of Ephesians 6. He's not even talking about gifts. He's talking about armor. And not only that, there's no example in the Bible where praying in the Spirit is equated to speaking in tongues.

[37 : 01] So what does it mean to pray in the Spirit? Like, I'm so glad you're here. Like, I'm so glad you're going to get this because this is like really important for prayer.

Are you with me? Say amen. Come on. It's easy. It's really simple. Okay, here we go. Watch, watch, watch. Walking in the flesh according to Paul.

Paul uses that phrase a lot. Do not walk according to the flesh, right? What does he mean by that? What he means is don't walk according to the desires of the flesh.

When he says, you know, don't walk according to the flesh, he's saying, don't walk according to the desires of the flesh. Everybody with me? Say yes. So then when he turns around and says, no, walk by the Spirit, what does he mean?

Or walk in the Spirit? Walk according to the desires of the Spirit. It's very simple. Don't walk according to the flesh, that is the desires of the flesh, but walk according to the Spirit.

[37 : 59] Walk in the Spirit, not walk in the flesh. And walking in the Spirit is to walk according to the desires of the Spirit. So what does it mean to pray in the Spirit?

Very simple. To pray in harmony with the Spirit. Just like walking in the Spirit is walking according to the desires of God, praying in the Spirit is praying according to the desires of God.

You want a good example of it? Jesus. Not my will, but your will.

That's praying. It's praying according to or praying in the Spirit. In other words, here it is, here it is. We pray not for the will of self.

We pray for the will of the Spirit or the will of God. Right? So we recognize that the ultimate will, the ultimate desire in this war is not ours, it's God's.

[39 : 10] It's that which the Spirit desires. And look what happens when we pray in the Spirit, that is pray in alignment with or pray in harmony with the Spirit. Notice what the Spirit does.

This may be, you ready to be encouraged, this might be one of the most encouraging verses in all the Bible. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

You know why? Because you don't even know what to pray. Anybody agree tonight that the Spirit knows more what to pray than you do? You should probably say yeah to that one.

Okay? We don't even know what to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words and he who searches hearts knows what is in the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints uh-oh, uh-oh, according to the will of God.

So why do we pray in alignment with the Spirit? Why do we pray in the Spirit according to the desires of the Spirit? Because even when we don't know how to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us in our prayer and prays according to the will of God.

[40 : 34] So you better not pray in the flesh or pray in the self. Pray in the Spirit. Pray in the Spirit. So that the will of God will ultimately be the priority and desire of your prayers.

So praying in the Spirit simply means praying in harmony with the Spirit of God according to or for the will of God. So here's a summary.

Okay, we're almost done. Just kidding. Uh, quick review. Our perspective in prayer is what? War. War. It's Ephesians 6. This is all about the armor of God.

The practice is frequent and variety and faithfully and for strength. And the priority is what? The will of God. The purpose of God.

Because this is about the mission of God not just my life. So yeah, I make my request known. The Bible tells us to do that. But I make all those requests known.

[41 : 38] I don't know, I might go like this. Like, could you remove this cup? That's my request. But I'm praying in the Spirit which adds but not my will yours.

Do you see? So this isn't don't pray for what you want. Pray for what you want. Jesus wanted the cup to be removed. But ultimately he wanted God's will. Even if it meant the battle going longer.

that'll preach. Y'all with me? Last thing. Last thing. Last thing. Why are we even able to pray this way?

Why are we even able to pray this way? Because here's what I, the thought that came to me as I was putting this together. I thought, listen, there is not a soldier in any army who gets to walk into the office of the commander in chief and ask for help.

There is not a petty officer anywhere who gets to walk into the White House and offer up requests, right? And so I'm sitting here thinking, what, how do we even have this direct line?

[43 : 01] Are you with me? Like, what allows me, a petty officer at best, to walk into the very throne room of the ultimate superior and ask him to pray, to offer up requests and supplication?

Well, I'm going to close by making a very important gospel connection. You should not be surprised. Notice what the Bible teaches. Man, I hope this just blows our minds.

Okay? Notice what the Bible teaches that Jesus does for us that enables us to pray this way. Two verses. First, Hebrews 7, 22, beginning of verse 23.

The former priest, that's the priest associated with the Old Covenant, were many in number, but they were prevented by death from continuing in office. But Jesus holds his priesthood how long?

Permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God.

[44 : 21] What is that? That's prayer. Those that draw near to God through Jesus since Jesus always lives to make intercession for them.

Just hold on. Hold on. Romans 8, verse 34. Who is to condemn? Jesus Christ is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Do you have any idea what that means? Let me put it all together. Here it is. Here it is. Come on, Lord, blow our minds with this. Jesus not only died on the cross for your sins, Jesus not only rose from the grave to give you new life, He is also seated at the right hand of God.

And listen, He always lives to make intercession for you. Here it is.

[45 : 38] Here it is. Meaning, you can always pray to God because Jesus is always praying for you. that just what? What? Because what is intercession? That's prayer. When we talk about prayer, we're interceding for one another.

It's like a mediator office here. And Jesus always lives to do that for you. There isn't a moment Jesus isn't praying for you.

Not a moment. for eternity he is your great high priest. For eternity he's making intercession. So do you know why you can have intercessory prayer?

Because Jesus is interceding for you. And it's why, it's why, it's why you get to do what no other soldier has ever been able to do, walk right into the president's office.

[46 : 46] Boldly, Hebrews tells us because of Jesus. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, put on the whole armor of God.

Put on the belt of truth. Let us be a people, a church that is grounded in the gospel, clear on who Jesus is and what he has done for us, his life, his death, his resurrection and ascension so that our breastplate will be tight, that we will know who we are, that he is our righteousness, that our life is hidden in him, that there is no condemnation in us because we are in Jesus.

And that gives us secure feet, for by faith we have been justified and we have peace with God. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our salvation is secure. Therefore when the arrows come and they will, the sufferings of life, the trials, the loss, the heartache, the disappointment, the sorrow, the stress and worry, we will raise our shield of faith and we will keep marching forward.

We will not look back. We will not give up. We will not let discouragement lead us to defeat. We will set our minds on a future day of salvation, a glory that the suffering of this life cannot compare to a day when we will see Jesus, a day when there will be no more pain and death will be no more.

[48 : 23] And when the evil spiritual powers try to take that away from us through their deceitful schemes, we will take out our sword which is the infallible, all-sufficient, inerrant, perfect word of God given to us by the Spirit of God containing the power of God and we will fight, fight, fight, fight.

We will destroy strongholds and take every thought captive in Christ and we will stand firm, strong in the Lord. How? By in every way and always getting on our knees in harmony with the Spirit, utilizing the direct line we have to our sovereign King, the one the Bible says is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion He is above every name that is named not only in this age but in the age to come and He has put all things under His feet and given Him as the head over all things to the church.

We are the army of God clothed in the armor of God which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And faith family because evil spiritual powers could not defeat Him they cannot and they will not defeat you.

And all God's people said Amen. Let's pray. Father thank You so much for the things You continue to teach us here in Ephesians 6 how prayer is the way in which we apply the armor that there is no living in any of this truth without living in Your presence daily with variety faithfully and I pray I pray Lord that You would change our minds change our perspective of this life that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood we think we do but we do not there's a greater war going on and that means we must be a soldier on our knees and we stand firm by getting on our knees praying all times in every way and so I pray Lord that I pray I plead I ask that You would take this message and help us realize the seriousness of the situation that Lord we would adapt a wartime mentality and be an army at prayer and we pray this in

Jesus name Amen