

Spiritual Warfare: Equipped for Battles

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[0 : 00] Father, we're so grateful for that truth. That while our sins may be many,! Your grace is abundant.

! For Cliff, for him sharing the word with us this morning, I pray that you would go before him and bless him, bless the ministry of the word as he presents it, and I pray that our hearts would be receptive, that your Holy Spirit would do its work in us, and help us not just to be hearers of the word, but to be doers of the word.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, good morning.

It is great to be with you already. In Sunday school, it was great to be able to share a little bit about the ministry that God's called us to in England, and we do have, let me just mention, our prayer cards and some stickers on our table in the back of the foyer there, if you would like to pick one up. That would be great. If I could encourage you to turn to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6. And I don't know if you normally do this or not, but we're going to read the scripture together.

[1 : 41] We're going to stand together. If there's a Bible in front of you, and you aren't sure where Ephesians is, I think it's on page 979 in the Bible. But if we'll stand together as I read from Ephesians chapter 6, verse 10.

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.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication.

[3 : 05] 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.

Please have a seat. Well, I probably don't need to remind you of this, but if you haven't heard, our country is involved in a war, a war with Iran.

You probably have seen that on the television, in the news. Maybe you've felt that as you went to the gas pump, although it's starting to come back down again. Reminders of the fact that there's a war happening.

But if you're honest, you probably don't think about it that much. There aren't really that many visual and auditory reminders I'm imagining here in Columbus. I know when I talk to my mother-in-law up in Akron, it's like, you know, yeah, I see it on the TV, but that's pretty much about it.

Where we live in the UK, in Swindon, we live just below a Air Force base, a U.S. Air Force base called Fairford, and it's a place where the planes fly in and out of going to the Middle East to the war.

[4 : 22] So we see bombers and things flying over. There's auditory reminders. You can hear the planes before you see them. You look up in the sky, and they fly right over our house as they head out and back. Every single day for the past couple months, you see the planes, and you're

reminded there's a war happening.

However, it still feels a little bit removed from us. It's not like being on the ground in Iran. We have some colleague who work in Kiev in Ukraine, and they speak about having to hide in the hallways and things as bombs are going off around them and buildings are being destroyed.

It'd be a lot different living in the war zone, wouldn't it? You'd probably be reminded in a different way about the war that's happening around you. And as we think about this reality of what we read in Ephesians 6, we're reminded that there is a war that's happening.

It's happening every single day. It's a war that is happening here in Columbus, here this morning at Maranatha Baptist Church. It's a war that maybe we forget about as we go about our daily life.

Because this war doesn't get the same kind of news coverage as the war in Iran. It doesn't get any kind of press coverage. And we can't see it, even though we can see some of the effects of this war around us.

[5 : 45] And that's what Paul is reminding the Ephesians as he closes his letter that he has written to the church there in Ephesus. He wants to remind them of this reality of spiritual war that they are involved in.

Now we're jumping right into the end of Ephesians. And so I know there's a lot that happens before in Ephesians. And I'm not going to share everything, but just a very quick overview that leads us up to this point.

Because God has this glorious picture that Paul writes about, this plan for his people, the church in his world. God's plan for God's people in God's world.

In chapter 1 of Ephesians, we are told that God has this plan to unite all things together in heaven and on earth in Christ. In chapter 2, we begin to see how that plan is being realized as people are brought into a relationship with God.

He brings them from spiritual death to spiritual life. He makes them alive by grace through faith in Christ. It's an amazing reality. And we are made new creations in Christ. Individually.

[6 : 53] But that's not all that chapter 2 says. It also says that the Jews and the Gentiles are brought together into one new body, one new humanity. God's creating a new humanity that we know of as the church.

And if you're here as a believer this morning, you're a part of that body. You're a part of that church. And in chapter 3, he goes on to tell us that God has this, he's displaying his manifold wisdom to the entire cosmos in the church.

I wonder if you feel like that this morning as you sit here. This is a display of God's manifold wisdom. Right here. You look around the church. Isn't that a wonderful thing?

And then in chapters 4 through 6, he begins to show us what that picture looks like as we live out our lives as Christians. Right? As we walk out our faith.

Right? As we walk in love. As we walk in wisdom, in light, in unity, in purity, in wisdom. And then as he closes his letter, he talks about spiritual warfare.

[8 : 03] And in one sense, it might feel like he's kind of taking a left turn, but in another sense, this is so applicable to what he's been saying for the whole letter. Because I don't know about you, but sometimes it can feel really difficult in church.

I don't know. Maybe Maranatha is different. But sometimes relationships can be difficult, right? Sometimes it can be hard to live out our faith and we struggle.

Why is it so hard? Why is it so hard to live out the picture that Paul presents here in the book of Ephesians? Well, because we're under attack. There's a battle that's raging.

And we are involved. We are at war. An unseen spiritual battle that's taking place. And we need to be equipped for the battle. So there are three things that we're going to think about from Ephesians 6 here.

The first is that we must prepare for the spiritual battle. We must prepare for the spiritual battle. We see that in verses 10 through 12. Well, how is it that we're going to prepare for the battle? Well, first, it requires God's strength.

[9 : 07] See that in verse 10. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Do you notice the strength terms there? Strong and strength and might. Three terms there. He's building upon.

He's trying to remind them. Finally, as we are engaged in this battle, the very first thing we need to understand is that we need God's strength. Why does He need to remind them of that? Well,

because we are often prone to fight in our own strength, aren't we?

Why? I've got this. I'm okay. This isn't going to be a problem. No, He says, you are not strong enough in and of yourself. But there is a strength that is available to you that will make you strong enough for the battle.

It's the strength that comes from God. It's being strong in the strength of His might. It's a passive verb there when it says be strong.

It could be translated to be made strong or to be strengthened. This is something God does in and through us by His Spirit. You see, this battle that we're engaged in, we're going to see is supernatural and so it requires supernatural strength.

[10:16] And that's why I think Paul prays the way he does in the book of Ephesians. In chapter 1, verses 19 and 20, Paul prays that they would know the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us who believe.

And then he goes on to tell us what that power is like. What is that power like? It's the power that raised Jesus from the dead. I mean, that's some power. And he says, that's available to us. And so he prays that they would know that power.

Why? Because they're going to be engaged in this battle and they need God's strength. In chapter 3, again, when he prays, he prays that God would grant them to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in their inner being.

They're going to need that strengthening in order to live out what he's going to talk about in chapters 4, 5, and 6. This is going to be necessary. We need Christ's strength for this battle.

But not only do we need His strength, we need His armor. And that's why he goes on to say, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. The whole armor of God.

[11:15] Whose armor is it? God's armor. He provides the armor to us. And we are to put on the whole armor, not just parts of it. You know, this is probably a familiar passage to many of you. You've grown up in church.

You Sunday school. It's like, oh yeah, I know there's the six pieces of armor, right? And you have the helmet and the sword and the shield. And it doesn't do so much good just to know about it, right?

Paul doesn't say, know about the armor. He says, put on the armor, right? So it doesn't know good if it's just kind of sitting over there and I know it's there and it's great. No, I need to be, right? People who go onto the front line, they're like, well, I know I have some equipment that's back in the tent, but I'll just kind of leave it there.

No, they're going to put it on. Why? So they're prepared for the battle. God has given us this armor so that we can be engaged in this battle. It's a metaphor that he's using.

Again, he's not talking about physically putting on pieces of armor. When Josiah was younger, there was a VBS of the church that I grew up in. They were doing about spiritual warfare and we were the missionaries for the week and so we had to produce these videos and so we dressed him all up, you know, in the little plastic, you know, armor that you can get.

[12:21] That's not what we're talking about. It's a metaphor, right? Putting on, and Paul uses a different metaphor in Colossians, does he? In Colossians 3, put on the new self, the new man. It's synonymous, right?

That's what he's talking about here. Being prepared for the battle means we need his armor. But we also need to know our enemy, don't we? When you're fighting in a battle, you need to know who the enemy is and so he wants us to know who the real enemy is in the next verse.

For we do not wrestle, he tells us who the enemy is not, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. So the enemy is not other people. The enemy is not other religions. The enemy is not other churches.

The enemy is not people who don't know Jesus. No. The enemy is not human. Well, who is the enemy then? Well, the enemy is the rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil that are in the heavenly places.

This is where the real battle is fought. It's a cosmic reality of spiritual forces, the devil and those who are aligned with him who are fighting against God and his people, seeking to disrupt God's kingdom.

[13:29] And they're fighting with all of their strength. Satan knows his time is short. That's what Revelation 12 says. He knows his time is short. And so one of Satan's strategies in this battle is to

get us focused on the wrong enemy.

We start fighting each other rather than fighting the real enemy, Satan, rather than taking our stand against him in the armor of God.

So the battle is against the devil and his spiritual forces. So if we need to know our enemy, then it's important for us to make sure that we understand him well. Right? You could just imagine maybe a path and having ditches on either side.

Right? There's a way in which we should understand who our enemy is, but there are some ditches we could fall into if we aren't careful. Two of the ditches on either side, we could underestimate our enemy or we could overestimate our enemy.

I don't know which maybe you might have more of an issue with. Different people will have an issue with one or the other typically. For many people, they will underestimate the devil.

[14:40] If you underestimate the devil, you won't worry about putting on the armor. What do you need it for? He's not that strong. We don't need to really worry about him. Martin Lloyd-Jones, I think there will be a quote that comes up, says, I am certain that one of the main causes of the ill state of the church today is the fact that the devil is being forgotten.

That was written over 50 years ago. That's still true today. The reality is that Satan is alive and active. He is limited. Okay?

But we can't underestimate him. He is attacking us. He's like, we're told in 1 Peter, or 1 Peter, that he is like a lion who is seeking someone to devour.

Does that sound like a friendly enemy? Does that sound like somebody we don't need to be worried about? I mean, I don't want to be in a cage with a lion. I'm going to be his lunch. And so we don't want to underestimate him on the one hand, but on the other hand, we don't want to overestimate him.

And sometimes people do that. Oh, you know, we need to be afraid of him. Oh, he's got so much power. He's so much more powerful and all of this stuff that's happening in the world and, you know, witchcraft and new age stuff and, oh, it's, you know, and they're afraid.

[15:49] Well, if we're afraid, what are we going to do? We're going to run the other way, aren't we? Is that what Paul says? He says, take your stand. Be strong in the strength of his might and put on the full armor of God so he can stand against the schemes of the devil.

And listen, we don't have to be afraid of our enemy because he's already defeated. That's the good news of the Bible. Yeah? The good news of Christianity is Jesus already defeated our enemy. It's already done.

The battle has been won at the cross and through his resurrection. Jesus disarmed, we're told in Colossians chapter 2, verse 15, he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Jesus.

That's what's happened. Now, just because the battle has been won doesn't mean that there still aren't battles taking place. It's kind of like World War II.

Right? World War II pretty much was won on D-Day, June 6th, 1944. But the reality is that the war didn't stop on June 5th, did it?

[16:59] It continued for almost a whole another year before VE Day, May of the next year. And some of the fiercest fighting was in that last year. Some of the worst casualties happened in that last year.

It's similar. The battle's been won, but there's still a battle taking place. The war has been won, but the battle's still taking place. But we should be encouraged. Jesus has won. And if you know Him, you're on the winning side.

And you have everything necessary for the battle. So we need to prepare for this spiritual battle. Secondly, we must stand firm in God's armor. So we're to put on the armor of God and next He says that we're to stand firm.

Verse 13, therefore, take up the whole armor of God, why that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm, stand therefore. So He had these strength terms in verse 10.

Now He has stand terms, right? Take your stand, stand firm, stand therefore. Why? Well, because we need to take our defensive position against the enemy.

[18:03] It doesn't say attack the devil, does it? It says take your stand. It's primarily defensive and that's why when we look at the armor, it's primarily defensive as well.

we're to hold ground that Jesus has already won. He won that ground. We're not to let the devil take back any of that ground or try to. He can't ultimately do that because He's already won.

Jesus has already won. But He's going to fight with everything He has to disrupt God's work in this world, in churches, in families, in communities.

When is He supposed to, or when are we supposed to take our stand? It says in the evil day. Do we live in the evil day? What do you think? Yes? No? I don't know. As I look around, it feels like that's the reality.

We live in the evil day and we're told in the evil day to take our stand. Not in peacetime. You don't need to take your stand in peacetime. We are at war and we need to be ready for taking our stand. [19:05] Paul is trying to emphasize a sense of urgency here as he piles up these standing words. He wants us to be ready with the armor of God.

And then he goes on to share the pieces of the armor, which again, we're familiar with. I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about each of the pieces of armor, but before we get to each of the pieces of armor, some people think, you know, Paul, he talks about being in chains, right?

An ambassador in chains at the end of the passage, right? In prison, and maybe he's chained to a guard and he's looking at his armor and that's what, and that might be the case. I don't know. I'm not Paul. But I also wonder if he didn't have the book of Isaiah in mind because in Isaiah, there is a picture of a divine warrior.

It's talking about Jesus, the Messiah, who fights in God's armor. And it uses even similar terms, breastplate and helmet and belt. I wonder if he had that in mind as he's writing these words because remember, it is the armor of God, God's armor that's given to us to fight in this battle. He's won that battle and now that armor is available to us as well as he fights for and saves his people we see in Isaiah and we're told to take up that same armor.

[20:16] So the first piece is the belt of truth. The belt of truth. In each of these pieces, there's a word associated with this one is truth. When we think about truth, right, we think of objective truth.

The Bible is God's objective truth. It's his spoken word to us. This is true. We can trust it. We can stand upon it. God is faithful to his word. And that's really important.

In a culture, I live in a culture where God's word is not valued. It's not seen as important. And unfortunately, sometimes in churches, that is the case.

No, we need to make sure that we stand on the truth. But not just know the truth. I mean, that's important. We're called to live it out, right? So there's a reality of the objective truth, but the subjective reality of living out that truth as we are truthful, reliable, faithful people, as the truth works its way in and through our lives.

Now, Satan seeks to undermine God's truth, doesn't he? He wants to distort God's word. He wants us to turn away from God's word. In John chapter 8, verse 44, it says that this is a description of Satan.

[21:31] He was a murderer from the beginning. He does not stand in the truth. Why? Because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character for he's a liar and the father of lies.

So Satan is the father of lies. He has no truth, but God is the God of truth. And Satan tries to fight against God's truth with his lies. He's been doing this ever since the beginning of the Bible.

Just read your Bible, right? The very beginning, he lies to Adam and Eve, doesn't he? The serpent comes into the garden of Eden, and what does he say? Did God actually say that you can't eat of any of the trees in the garden?

Did he actually say that? And what did Eve and Adam do? They believed the lie. Now let's not be too hard on them because every single person has believed the lie as well.

Satan is fighting against God's truth with his lies. We need to have the belt of truth on. God's objective word, Jesus is the truth, the way, the truth, and the life. We need to have that belt fastened around us so that we can battle against the lies of the enemy.

[22:47] Second piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. Again, when we think of righteousness, we might be reminded of the righteousness of Jesus, his perfect sanctifying, his perfect justifying righteousness that we experience when we trust in Jesus.

Not only are your sins forgiven, and that's a wonderful thing, when you trust in Jesus, your slate is wiped clean. All of your sin has been dealt with on the cross. Is that good news?

Do you know that that's not the end of the story though? It's not like your bank, you know, balance goes from negative to zero. It goes infinite.

Why? Because we are credited with the righteousness of Jesus. It's imputed, given to us. We stand in his righteousness. That's a wonderful truth so we can put on the breastplate of righteousness because we stand in the righteousness of Jesus.

And that then leads to sanctifying righteousness. So then again, we are people who should be righteous in our character and our conduct and the way that we live. We should be known as righteous people. Not perfect people, but people who are transformed by God's Spirit.

[23 : 57] And that affects the way we live and that should be noticed. We need to put on that breastplate of righteousness. Why? Well, because Satan wants to accuse us. Revelation chapter 12, verse 10.

Satan is the accuser of the brothers. He accuses them day and night before God. Did I say he's a relentless enemy? What is he doing?

Accusing us day and night before God. There he is. You know about that cliff? I mean, do you see what he did? Oh, do you hear what he said? Oh, don't you remember?

And he's there accusing us before the Father. But you know what the good news is? Not only is there an accuser, the Bible says there's an advocate. 1 John, 1 John chapter 2, verse 1.

We have an advocate with the Father. Who is the advocate? So Satan is our adversary, the one who is attacking us. Who's our advocate? It's Jesus Christ.

[24 : 58] And do you notice what it says about him? He's the righteous. Jesus is the righteous one. And we stand in his righteousness as we are in this battle. We can stand in the righteousness of Jesus because our salvation is not dependent on what we have done but what Jesus has done.

That is foundational to Christianity. If we get that wrong, then we get Christianity wrong. It's not about being a good person. So many people in England think that that's what Christianity is all about.

Be a good person. No. It's about what Jesus has done because all of us are not good people. All of us are sinners in need of salvation.

And God in his love sent his son who came to this earth and lived a perfect life. The only human being ever to do that. And he went to the cross and he paid the penalty for our sin.

He was buried and he rose again conquering Satan, conquering death, conquering sin. He stands as our victor, our savior and we trust in him and we stand in his righteousness.

[26 : 05] A third piece is the shoes of readiness from the gospel of peace. The gospel prepares us for the battle. It gives us stability and security. stability and security comes from the truths of the gospel.

It is the gospel of peace. So in Romans 5.1 we're reminded that we've been justified by faith and as a result of that we now have peace with God through Jesus.

It's the gospel good news that says we have peace with God. Again, not because of what we've done but because of Jesus. That's a beautiful thing. That's what he's talking about in chapter 2 when he says that people have been made alive and they've now been saved by grace through faith in Jesus.

And one of the results of that is we have peace. We are no longer at war with God. We were before but now we aren't. And he enlists us to be a part of his army. What a joy it is to serve King Jesus. But not only do we have peace vertically we have peace horizontally. That's what chapter 2 also tells us. We've been brought together into one new humanity. We have brothers and sisters in Christ.

[27 : 16] We're a part of one family. God's family as his children. And so there's this reality of the gospel of peace but even as we think about the shoes of the gospel of peace I'm reminded of the reality of sharing that good news.

Right? So not only do we stand in that good news and the truths of the gospel that we're justified and we have peace with God but we have that message to share with people. It's one of the privileges we have as Christians.

We get to share the good news of Jesus with people. It's wonderful. It's difficult. Satan fights against us at every step as we're seeking to do that.

He's trying to distort the truth that we share and blind people Paul says in 2 Corinthians. But God is stronger than that. And so as I think about the shoes I'm reminded of Romans 10 15 where Paul

quotes from Isaiah chapter 52 verse 7 how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.

How are people going to hear? Well some people need to be sent and those sent people get to preach the good news and their feet are beautiful. We need to have those shoes on our feet as we take the good news of Jesus to the world.

[28 : 33] Satan doesn't want us to live as God's reconciled people and he doesn't want us to take the gospel to those who are trapped in darkness and yet it's part of the battle we're engaging. The fourth piece of armor as we continue to move on is the shield of faith.

As we think of faith think of trusting God. I think it's one of the easiest ways to describe faith is trusting in God. We trust in him. He is faithful. We have confidence about who he is about what he says.

We have confidence in the promises that he has made in his word. We can stand firm in those realities and as we trust in God we're able to deflect the attacks of the enemy.

He seeks to attack your faith if you're a Christian. I'm sure if you've walked with the Lord for any length of time you will know that there are attacks that come your way. There's temptation to sin. There's doubt and guilt and shame that he seeks to remind us of. We can stand firm in the reality of God's truth as we trust in his word.

[29 : 40] 1 Peter 5, 8, and 9 I mentioned this alluded to it earlier right? The devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. What are we to do? Resist him. How? Firm in your faith with the shield of faith.

We resist the devil. We resist his attacks with the shield of faith so that we're prepared for the battle. The next piece of armor is the helmet of salvation.

This reminds us of the reality that we are saved by God's grace but there's also a sense in which we understand and know that deep down in our souls. Why? Because God by his spirit says to our spirit it says in Romans that we're children of God.

And so not only is it just like oh yeah I know the Bible says that when I put my trust in Jesus. No, you experience and feel the reality of being saved. Of being rescued. Of being brought into God's family.

The helmet of salvation. God wants to or sorry Satan wants to attack our assurance of salvation. Constantly.

[30 : 48] And this is why again understanding the reality of why and how we're saved is so important. If we begin to think that our salvation is dependent in us in any way this is one of those places that Satan will attack and he'll get in.

If we aren't protected we can know that we're saved if we're trusting in Jesus and his work. The Bible promises that and we can trust God's word.

And lastly the sword of the spirit the word of God. Again I've already said Satan wants us to disbelieve. He tempts us not to believe God's word. So he did it in the garden of Eden and then he repeated it didn't he?

In the beginning of the New Testament just like he did at the beginning of the Old Testament you have the beginning of the New Testament as Jesus comes on the scene and the spirit leads Jesus out into the wilderness and what does Satan do? He comes and he tempts him three times and Jesus refutes those temptations every single time.

How does he do that? The word of God. Yeah. Do you know where he quotes from? The book that all of us would go to if we're being tempted.

[31 : 57] The book of Deuteronomy like you know it like the back of your hand. It's just interesting isn't it? All three times he quotes from Deuteronomy. I guess that's an important book to know.

And so the reality is he battles against Satan even when Satan tries to quote scripture at him from Psalm 91 he refutes that he doesn't take the bait he stands firm in the midst of those temptations in a way that Adam and Eve haven't and we haven't either.

And we can thank God for that and we can seek to follow his example. That's why knowing scripture is so important. I'm so thankful in the church that I grew up in we had Awana and I memorized so many verses.

There are still today verses that I know because of that program. I'm thankful for that. And that helps me that equips me for the battle that we're engaged in.

So we need to stand firm in God's armor. I wonder have you been putting on the whole armor of God? So prepare for this spiritual battle. We must stand firm in God's armor. And lastly we must pray and keep alert verses 18 to 20.

[33 : 06] We must pray and keep alert. We need to keep alert because the battle is imminent and if we aren't alert we will miss the dangers around us. We won't see what's happening and we won't be prepared for the attacks of the enemy.

I'm reminded of Mark 14 verse 38. Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. I don't know if you remember where that was. Again if you know the story of the gospels well.

This is just before Jesus is going to the cross. He's going to be praying himself in the garden of Gethsemane. And what does he do? He tells his disciples the three disciples that are there watch and pray that you might not fall into temptation.

There's a battle raging. You're not aware of it. You need to be prepared for it. How are you going to be prepared for it? Watch and pray. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Isn't that what you see happen?

What do they do? They fall asleep. They're not prepared for the battle. When Jesus is arrested they all flee. Peter denies him three times. Yet Peter's spirit I think was willing.

[34 : 10] Right? Because just before that Peter says I will go to my grave with you. I will die with you. His spirit was indeed willing. His flesh was weak.

So when the battle raged and the temptation came he denied the Lord three times. We need to be ready. And prayer is one of the ways that we equip and prepare ourselves.

Our lack of prayer reveals our lack of dependence on God. I don't know about you but prayer is hard. Okay? I'm not standing here as like I've got this all sorted out.

My prayer life is the best prayer life. It's a struggle. It's a battle. It's hard because it's part of this battle. Satan again doesn't want us to pray because he knows that we need God's strength.

He knows that we need God's armor. And as we put on that armor as we're praying and we're asking for God's help in this battle. God's And so he's trying to get us not to pray.

[35 : 15] Don't worry about that. I mean nobody's going to know. Nobody sees that. And yet when I don't pray what I'm saying is God actually I don't need you. I got this sorted.

What am I doing? I'm standing in my own strength. What has he told us right at the beginning? Be strong in the strength of his mind. Not in our own strength. We need his help. And so we need to saturate every aspect of this battle in prayer.

And that's why he uses the term all in the next couple verses. When should we pray? At all times. How should we pray? With all prayer and supplication. How should we pray? With all perseverance. Who should we pray for? For all the saints. Four times he uses the term all. That's a challenge isn't it? I mean when I think about my life I pray at some times with some prayer and supplication some perseverance for some people and I imagine you're probably similar.

And that's okay. I'm not here to beat you up. I'm here to say this is so important. Let's be people who pray. We are so grateful for people who pray for us. Like I'm telling you that the battle that we are engaged in in the UK is not any different than the battle here.

[36 : 28] But we are so dependent on the prayers of God's people for us. Our church is dependent on it. I think there's a picture of our church that's going to come up next. Please be praying for Pathway Church, for the believers there who are engaged in this battle.

Pray because Satan is not happy that a church is being established in this community. That people are being rescued from darkness and brought into God's kingdom. They are not happy about that. And so he's fighting. Please be praying! Please be praying for us as well.

And I can say that because that's what Paul goes on to do. He says pray for me. What does he pray for? For clarity and courage. That words may be given to him to proclaim the mystery of the gospel. And that he may open his mouth boldly to declare it boldly.

Please pray that for us as we share the good news of Jesus that we would be clear, that we would be bold. And I pray that for you as well.

[37 : 37] That you will be a church who clearly presents God's word and who boldly proclaims that in your community. It's great to see all the kids up here to hear about the week of football camp, soccer camp, we call it football.

The World Cup is great, you know, great timing. And yeah, so I think our prayer card picture might be on there as well. Again, we have those on our table. Please pick those up. And I just want to end with this.

Your prayers matter. It's really important. I hope you understand that. Please don't think prayer is just an add-on or something that missionaries are told to say.

We are dependent on your prayers. I know there's somebody in the church here that regularly communicates, lets me know that they're praying for me. And that's a real encouragement to me, to get those emails each month, just to remind me that there are people praying for us as we're engaged in this spiritual battle.

Satan, our enemy, is seeking to steal, kill, and destroy, to undermine our Christian walk in the witness of the church. And so it's not surprising that church planting is hard, that missions is hard, that church is hard, that evangelism is hard, because we're in a spiritual battle.

[38 : 55] But Jesus has won. We stand in his victory. And he's given us everything to be effective in this battle. let's pray. Father, we thank you for your goodness to us.

We thank you for Jesus. We thank you that in your love you sent him, and that he, as the divine warrior, won the battle for us as he went to the cross and rose from the dead.

God, we glory in him this morning. I pray if there's anybody here who doesn't know him yet, God, would you in your grace and goodness open their eyes to see the reality of your love for them and what you have done so that they can have a relationship with you.

And for those who do know you, please help us to be prepared for this battle. As we stand in your strength, as we put on your armor, please help us to do that and help us to be people of prayer. But ultimately we know that we're on the winning side. we glory in that reality and we give you praise and honor this morning. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

[40 : 04] Amen.