

Ephesians 6:17–20

“Minds Protected by the Spirit through Scripture and Prayer”

2021.01.03 Evening Sermon

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Ephesians Chapter 6 verses 17 through 20. Let's pray.

Our father in heaven our minds are vulnerable. Protect us we pray. By saturating them with the words of your eternal life of your salvation. We have no sword of our own. Grant us we pray to. Have and wield skillfully the sword of your spirit. Make us we pray so mindful of your word.

That we would be always turning it back over to you in prayer. Grant us as we pray not to pray only for ourselves, but even. Following your priorities that we learn in scripture. To pray for all saints everywhere. And especially pray for the servants whom you have called to preach.

That they might have the words to speak. And that they might speak it with boldness. Oh Lord if the result of our reading and hearing. This afternoon is to be the effectual realization of these things in our lives. And must be by the merciful powerful work of your spirit.

Which we ask for us now in Jesus name amen. Season six verses 17 through 20, these are God's words and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit. Being watchful to this end.

With all perseverance and supplication for all the saints and for me. That utterance may be given to me. That I may open my mouth boldly. To make known the mystery of the gospel. For which I am and ambassador in chains. That in it. I may speak boldly. As I ought to speak.

So far. The word of God. The in the written words of God.

So we have been hearing about how to be strong in the strength of the Lord that's the reason to use the armor not so that we may be strong with strength that the desire for which comes from ourselves comes from our flesh, but so that we may be strong with Christ's strength for the work that Christ gives us to do and we come to the end of that armor here and you find that there's one verb for the helmet and the sword the helmet and disorder tied together and take.

The helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God our minds are vitally important. God created us that way physically, didn't he? You need armor for your head your head is vulnerable and a wound to the head is devastating often mortal isn't that what God means in Genesis 3 when he talks about the seed of the the woman and the seed of the serpent and then refers to the serpent himself bruising Christ or wounding smiting Christ heal wise but Christ would smite him headwise.

And the implication is that it would be a mortal wound that Jesus would crush Satan's head and so the mind of a Christian is very important and that which protects our minds is salvation now the helmet of salvation is not just the fact that we are saved it is at least that it is at least that you believe in Jesus Christ that he is your righteousness he is your salvation, his obedience is the worthiness that is counted for you his sacrifice is what puts away your.

Gift. But this helmet of salvation which is together at the same time the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and so what we see here is that our our minds our heads are protected by meditation upon scripture, and if you could if you would summarize what the Bible teaches you could do it in two words.

God saves the first time I was told something like that. I was told you could do it in three words. God saves sinners. You've probably need at least six. God save sinners by Jesus Christ and has good children of the Reformation we want to add alone and pretty soon we're fleshing out our theology, but that is what the Bible is it.

Odd for our eternal life that's what the disciples said didn't isn't it when the people were very offended that Jesus didn't intend to start and all you can eat buffet but that he intended that people should look to him and live and abide in him and that by that way his flesh and drink his blood and it was a hard saying and those who had claimed to be believers were.

We're going away from him and he turns to his disciples and he says are you leaving too and they say no where would we go you have the words of eternal life and the scriptures are the words of God for many things but ultimately at its core the word from

God to us about his salvation of us we should be those who are obsessed with who Jesus is and what Jesus has done and how that is fleshed out and all that God is doing and applying that and what it will be like, When Jesus has received everything that he has earned in his perfect work and the way to be properly obsessed about it is to meditate upon the word of God because that is what the word of God is full of then your head will be protected that's your helmet of salvation right there meditating on the Bible and wielding the sword of the Spirit and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, there's a wonderful illustration in first Samuel of what it's like to wield the sword of the Spirit you remember.

A young boy youngest in his family and he wasn't sent off to the war at first he was he was left back to take care of the sheep and he brought them some bread and cheese, you know, invite invent being a shark boards and the last several months. David was sent with one to his brothers and out comes this this.

Philistine blasphemer everybody else saw, you know, a big guy really scary yeah, but what did David saw and heard a blasphemer? Why I had everybody running out to destroy this man in the name of the Lord and David goes out and he says you come to me with sword and spear but I come to you in the name of Yahweh.

Well, After he had struck him down still needed to cut his head off because he had promised to feed it to the birds and he needed a sword. What sword did he use he took Goliath sword and later didn't we read just recently in first Samuel when David visits the priest and he's says he's on a secret mission apparently so secret that he had to leave in such ace that he forgot a weapon it's kind of an iffy story but what sword did the priest have with him he said well no weapons here except the sword of Goliath, what did David say?

There's none like it give it to me. Is that not how we are to read the sword of the spirit, that is the word of God. That you and I have not in our arsenal anything of our own but here is the sword of the great not just great champion, but all mighty champion the Holy Spirit himself.

Now that's how Samson got strong even in a physical sense, isn't it we read several times three. I think of the spirit rushing upon him but now our Redeemer who sits at the right hand of Majesty with whom we are seated in the heavenly places as poured out his spirit upon us and he has taken the spirits own sword and he puts it in our hands.

The best defense is indeed a good offense and we see even our savior himself wielding that that sword when he is tempted when he is attacked with temptations as fiery darts of the wicked one and he clings to his father and he wields the sword of the spirit which is the word of God, well if you're gonna wield the spirit sword you should wield it the spirits way now if you were gonna borrow or you have received as a gift a weapon from one of our fine leading marksmen in the congregation.

It would be a good idea for you to say well we'll get take me out and and walk me through shooting it a little bit well you want to wield the sword of the spirit verse 17 in the way of the spirit verse 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit there's indication here of what we are to do with the word of God as we mull it over meditate upon it think upon the word of God throughout our days that we are to be taking the things that the Bible tells.

Us about who God is and what he has done and whom he has made us to be in what he has called us to do and turning those things over to plan he says he's holy and we pray how would be thy name he says, he's bringing bringing a kingdom and he says, And we pray your kingdom come he's he says, you are to do my will you are to be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect and we say here will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And everywhere in scripture we ought to be seeing what it says and as we think about as we understand it everything that we understand from the Bible we are to be turning over and prayer to him so this this taking the sort of the spirit which is the word of God is conditioned or the manner in which we do that is is to be covered by or described by praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and it's probable that since this is the armor that this applies to all of the armor of God and that we are to be.

Praying always using in prayer the. Sorry the the truth and the breath plate of righteousness and the good news of peace with God and the shield of faith resting upon Jesus believing and holding on to what he has said about himself and about his work but it is especially tied to this sword of the spirit since this praying is in the spirit now when are we to pray?

Always right the Lord Jesus does model both for us doesn't he there are times at which the scripture that gives us those little glimpses into the conversation that he is carrying on continually with his father and then there are times where he draws away for a time just for concentrated prayer, it's not one or the other.

And not that I want to teach you how to get out of being honest with your elders, but if one of your elders asks, how's your prayer life going when you and yourself? I'm just praying all the time. And by that you mean I don't need set times of prayer, you've just said I'm stronger in my humanity than the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if you think that the set times of prayer are the only times that you're praying aren't you also saying the same thing? So praying always with all prayer there's a lot of all's here being watchful to this end with all perseverance what does it mean what does it tell you if you're told that you're going to need to do something with perseverance does it mean it's something that's going to be easy.

Doesn't mean it's something that's going to be naturally maintained. Have you ever found it difficult to start praying ever gotten a sentence or two in and found it difficult to keep praying if you ever gotten like two days into kind of a renewed vigor in your prayer life and got into the end of the third day and realize you had to spend a moment in thought towards.

God all day. Well the Bible is. Honest about what it's like for us, isn't it he exhorts us to all perseverance. So all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. And here the apostle is starting to apply now what we have just seen the sort of the spirit which is the word of God and we're turning it over in prayer and what has what is one of the main themes of the book of Ephesians.

How the whole church is one body and how we're all to supply something and we are in our walk with God and and in in seeking by the means that he has given in his written word and the ministry of that word by the pastor teachers that he sets over us and calls and gives us as gifts from heaven that one of the things we're doing is aiming at the good that God has designed to do through each of us to all the rest of us.

And so if you know that Christ loves and treasures his body and the and that he values unity and that we're to love one another and that when we don't it grieves the spirit then one of the ways that that's reflected is in praying for all the saints. That when we hear about Christians in one place or another and you know, one of the church plants of the early rain covenant Presbyterian Church has been a little over two years now since that church was rated one of their church plants yesterday was rated and all of the elders of that church in prison.

When you hear about that and you say well, I'm gonna pray for those saints. That's part of the body and then you especially pray for the congregation where the Lord has placed you but this outward looking selflessness you see Jesus loving his church as his bride and giving himself up for her and you love his bride.

And so you see that focus in prayer for all the saints is one that is a an application of something that we've just learned in the book of Ephesians itself of turning over into prayer in the spirit the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and then also for Paul and Paul has written to them when he says that he's an ambassador and James he's reminding them already of what he said in chapter 4 verse 1.

I therefore the prisoner of the Lord and as we'll see next week in verses 21. 22, he's expecting that both that they already care much about him and that they're care for him and his ministry will be stirred up by receiving this letter and so he's sending to Trish we want do all of next week's right now but when he says and for me what that utterance literally a word may be given to me that I may open my mouth boldly.

Now, that's encouraging because there are many of us who? We don't realize what cowards we are until it comes time to say something that might be offensive. Even if we love the person in front of us and we desire for them to be saved and. Boldness is a gift that the Holy Spirit gifts.

The kind of boldness that we want to have with others and especially that we want our elders to have with us as they preach is not just a function of personality, oh man, he's such a bold guy, he should be an elder he should be a preacher. No the the boldness that we seek for the preachers of the gospel to have is a boldness, that is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Paul they said was kind of impressive in his letters, but. That's so much a person. He knew he was not so much impressive in person. He's a prey that the Holy Spirit will not just give me the word to say but the boldness to say it in the way that I ought to say it.

We should be praying for preachers to be bold. I know that that has been for many of us as we have gone through the recent season in the church one of the great the burdens on our hearts to see the preachers of the Word of God do so with boldness and so that too is something you remember back to chapter four and Jesus ascended into heaven and giving gifts among men apostles prophets of Angeles and Pastor teachers so that concerned too that.

He's praying for himself as a preacher to have boldness and asking them to pray for that that's another example of the sword of the spirit that is the word of God well the word of God that they has just received talks about how Jesus the victorious let's the. Trying to say something other than victorious Victor I'll get marked off for it and literature class but the victorious victor the the champion the victorious champion in heaven as he gives gifts among men among those gifts are preachers and the the ministry of that preachers as necessary for the strength and health and stability of the body and so the sword of the spirit that is the word of God has told them about that now they are wielding it or commanded instructed by the apostle here to wield it by praying for a specific preacher that he would have boldness in that ministry that has been given.

To him that's just two examples, you know, we could make all sorts of applications here even just from this letter praying for marriage to be honored and the marriage bed undefiled praying for godly parenting praying for godliness in our everyday employments because those are the things that the Word of God has trained our lifts to pray for so.

Let us let us store up our hearts and minds with the word let us have our minds protected by being obsessed by the Bible and who Jesus is and what he has done his salvation, let us take up the sword of the spirit in the way of the spirit with all prayer and let us have our priorities in prayer shaped by the word of God.

Let's pray. We thank You Lord for this portion of your word for the conclusion to the description of the armor. Oh God, we have no strength of our own and we are so grateful that it is Christ's own strength that you give us. We think especially of those. Who are going and asking for basic integrity in the in the public life and the governmental life of our land we pray.

Lord that you would give them also opportunity to represent and speak. For the king of kings and that you would guard them by your spirit and strengthen them in Christ Lord each of us have things that you have called us to do this week even just and being good wives or husbands or children or parents or workers students, whatever you've given us to do that if we are to do it in the way that is described here, it has to be by the life of Jesus in us.

So grant us to be light in a dark age. Grant us to redeem the time because the days are evil as you fill us with. Your spirit by means of your word for these things this week we ask. In Jesus name. Amen.