

# Battle Prayers

Ephesians 6:18  
*Halifax: 18 January 2009*

## **Introduction:**

There is one great disadvantage to being rich...

- When you are rich, you are envied.
- There are many who resent it and who want to take away what you have.

Now you will say to me,

- What does this have to do with us?
  - None of us are rich.

My brothers and sisters,

- Let me once again remind you how rich you are!
- You who are trusting in Jesus Christ have been lavished with the riches of God's grace.
  - You have been completely forgiven of all your sins through the precious blood of Jesus Christ...
  - You have been adopted into the family of God so that God is your Father,
  - And you have an everlasting inheritance in the Kingdom of Glory that is ready to be revealed at the last day...
    - There you will live in full communion with God forever and ever...
      - He will bring you to live in the arena of perfect love in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have dwelt for all eternity.
      - You will lack nothing—nothing at all for your complete and total happiness.

But there is one who is very unhappy with your riches... Satan, the devil.

- His supreme goal from the creation of the world has been to divest human beings of the precious treasure they were given at creation:
  - Life in blessed communion with God our Creator!
  - He employed all of his craftiness and subtlety in the Garden to draw us away from our Maker almost as soon as we came from His hand.
    - And he succeeded.
    - In our foolishness, we, in our father Adam, fell into sin and rebellion and so out of favour with God and the blessing that comes from that favour.

But as the whole Bible teaches us, and in particular the first few chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesians,

- God did not leave us all to perish in our sin and misery...
  - He sent Jesus the redeemer to restore us to Himself through His death on the cross.
  - And then He came to us in the power of the Holy Spirit when we were dead in sin, and made us alive in Jesus Christ.
    - The riches were restored to us!
    - We are told how to live in the full enjoyment and blessedness of those riches in Ephesians 4, 5, and 6!
- And when we get to Ephesians 6:10,
  - We are reminded that the devil is still about his business of trying to divest us of our riches.
  - As soon as he sees some one enter the church, he goes to work to do all he can to hinder them and to make them fall away.
  - The one thing he cannot stand is to see believers enriched with God's grace and living in joyful communion with Jesus Christ.
  - He employs all those who are in league with him in a relentless battle against us.
- Now the Lord might certainly have simply removed us from all danger,
  - But instead, He has provided armour and instructed us to wear it that we might be able to withstand the onslaught.
    - He informs us that as long as we are in this world, we must wear this armour because as long as we are in this world,
      - we will be engaged in constant warfare with Satan and all his allies!
  - The armour is designed to keep us standing in the grace of God when Satan and his hosts try to pull us away.
    - In verse 14, we are told,
      - "Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth—we are to be true or sincere...sincerity is the first piece of armour....
      - and having put on the breastplate of righteousness—we are to maintain conduct that is in accord with God's will... that is the second piece...
      - and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace—we are to cherish the peace we have with God through Christ crucified...
      - above all taking the shield of faith—with this we are to quench the darts of the wicked one. With the shield of faith you see the invisible God—to check you in times of temptation, and to deliver you.

- You are also told to take the helmet of salvation—that is, of the hope of salvation which keeps you encouraged in the battle...
- And you take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, that you might refute all the lies of the wicked one.
- You are to wear this armour in order that you may stand...
  - But when you get to verse 18, there is something more that is added...
    - something essential!
    - something that is not a piece of armour,
      - but something that is a discipline in which you are to be constantly engaged...
      - **Prayer!**
- If you look at the structure of this passage,
  - You can see that the word “**praying**” at the beginning of verse 18
    - is connected to the command “**Stand therefore**” back in verse 14.
  - The word **praying** is one of a whole string of participles (i-n-g words) that explain how we are to stand...
    - It is connected to every participle so that the idea is...
      - “Stand, having girded your waist...
      - “Stand, having put on the breastplate...
      - “Stand, having shod your feet—
        - and so forth with all the rest of the armour...
    - And then in verse 18, it is modified by the word “praying”... so that we could say...
      - “Stand therefore... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...”
  - So the overarching idea is that in order to stand you not only need the whole armour of God...
    - You also need to be engaged in prayer!
    - Prayer is not a piece of armour, but a discipline in which you are to be constantly engaged in order that you may stand...
      - It is a calling upon God to help you and to keep you as you wrestle against the principalities and powers that try to make you fall.
      - You are to pray that you may be able to stand in the evil day.

- This reminds us of the sixth petition of the Lord’s prayer in which we are taught to say,
  - “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Verse 18 is simply packed with counsel about the practice of such prayer...

- There are six directives that we are given about it...
  1. First, that you are to pray in all seasons...
  2. Second, that you are to pray all sorts of prayers...
  3. Third, that you are to pray in the Spirit...
  4. Fourth, that you are to pray with watchfulness...
  5. Fifth, that you are to pray with perseverance...
  6. Sixth, that you are to pray for all the saints.
- Let us look at each of these directives more closely that we may understand how to implement them in order that by praying, we might be able to stand in the evil day.

## **TRANS> The first directive for Battle Prayers:**

### **I. Pray in all seasons**

A. This is found in the opening words of the NKJV, “**Praying always.**”

1. The word translated **always** is actually three words in the original—
  - A more literal translation would be *in every season*.
  - The word I have translated *season* here is *kairov* (ka-i-ros)
    - *kairov* is used by Jesus when He says (on several occasions),
      - “My time (*kairov*) has not yet come.”
    - It is used of the demons when they protest that Jesus has come to torment them
      - “before the time (*kairov*)”
    - It is used in Matthew 13:30 to refer to
      - “the time (*kairov*) of the harvest.”
2. So you can see that *kairov* speaks of a particular time or season—
  - a time that is distinguished by what takes place in it...
  - And so when you are told to pray in every season,

- you are being told to pray in all different sorts of circumstances and situations.
- Every season of life is to be characterised by prayer...

TRANS> So the idea here is not that you are to be on your knees every moment of the day...

B. The idea is that you are to pray in every sort of circumstance and situation...

1. You know that there are many different seasons and times that you pass through in your Christian life...

- There are:
  - seasons of comfort and seasons of sorrow...
  - seasons of rejoicing and seasons of lamentation...
  - seasons of struggle and seasons of ease...
  - seasons of battle and seasons of peace...
  - seasons of temptation and seasons of freedom from temptation...
  - seasons of progress and seasons of decline...
  - seasons of weakness and seasons of strength...
- And the point is that you are to give yourself in prayer in every season.
  - Some believers have difficulty giving themselves to prayer in the hard times...
    - others have difficulty continuing in prayer in the times of ease—when all is going well.
    - but you are to pray in every season!

2. But this does not at all mean that your prayers should be the same in every season.

- No indeed!
  - a. After a victory, there should be a season of thanksgiving!
    - If someone has been wrestled out of the darkness and brought into the light of Jesus Christ,
      - it is a time for rejoicing!
    - If the Lord grants you deliverance after a time of great testing,
      - it the season for celebration!
      - Our Lord Jesus gathers His church each Lord's Day to give thanks to God for accepting His sacrifice for our sins!
        - It is a time of thanksgiving and feasting.

- b. But then again, if the battle has just come on, your prayers should be different.
    - It is the season for crying out to the Lord with great earnestness...
      - In Psalm 141, we saw how David spoke of *crying* out to the Lord and how he pled with Him to hear...
        - That is a pray that honours God because it shows Him that it is very important to you to stand...
        - and you show Him that you consider His help to be your only hope...
          - That honours Him.
          - That is the proper way to pray in time of trouble—in the evil day.
  - c. And then, in a season of quiet, still you are to pray...
    - Then it is the season to pray for growth and for God’s protection—that He would not lead you into temptation...
    - It is the time to pray for growth in wisdom and service...
    - It is time to pray that you will remember the Lord and all He has done.
3. You see, there are prayers for every season and we are to pray accordingly.
- a. Do not be clueless as to what is going on around you the way the disciples of John the Baptist were...
    - Do you remember that?
      - They came complaining against Jesus’ disciples because Jesus disciples did not fast!
    - John had taught his disciples to fast, and rightly so...
      - His ministry was a ministry in the wilderness anticipating the coming of the Messiah...
      - It was characterised by fasting and repentance and prayer that the Messiah would come to save His people.
    - But John’s disciples were real bone heads when they complained at Jesus’ disciples for not fasting!
      - Jesus had to explain to them that it was no longer the season for fasting!
        - HE WAS THERE!
        - The disciples of John were wanting to fast because that is what they were in the habit of doing,

- but they did not need to fast anymore.
  - The Messiah had come!
    - He was right there in front of them, giving sight to the blind, cleansing the lepers, and preaching the gospel to the poor!
  - They didn't even notice that the season had changed!
    - It was no longer the season for fasting...
    - It was the season for rejoicing.
- b. In our praying, we are to be like the faithful steward who provides food in due season to the household he serves...
- 1) He gives to each what is right—
    - what is suitable and appropriate to the time...
    - Your prayers are to be suited to the times.
  - 2) You are not commanded to pray the same prayer in every season, but you are commanded to pray in every season.
    - There are prayers that are appropriate to one season that are not appropriate to another...
    - But there is no season in which it is appropriate to refrain from prayer.
    - You are to pray in every season.
      - That is the first directive.

TRANS> Now the second directive somewhat grows out of this first.

- The second directive is that you are to...

## **II. Pray all sorts of prayers**

A. This comes from the call in verse 18 to pray always *with all prayer and supplication*.

- The word *all* refers to all sorts of prayers and supplications.
- We are not to limit ourselves to any one species of prayer,
  - but to avail ourselves of all kinds of prayers...
  - To make use of every type of prayer and every venue for prayer.

B. What are some of the different kinds of prayer?

1. First, there are the two sorts of prayer that are expressly mentioned here—
  - “prayer and supplication.”

- Prayer is the general word for prayer and includes all varieties of prayer...
  - confession of sin, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, intercession, and even supplication...
- But the word supplication is added here to emphasise that we are not only to pray general prayers—
  - for God to bless His church, for the saints to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and for the return of Christ...
  - But we are also to pray specific prayers for specific things...
    - We are to pray for Madeleine Kubik’s surgery,
      - We are to pray that the church in Moncton will find a pastor...
      - And if we know that Bill has a problem with his temper, we are to pray about that in our private prayers.
- This is an important distinction to keep in mind—between general and specific prayers.
  - There are some believers who seem to only pray for specific things, and others who seem to never pray for specific things!
    - We are to do both.
    - That is one of the reasons we have a special prayer meeting in which we bring up specific requests—
      - so we can know specific things to pray for and pray for them...
    - In our worship service, when I lead in prayer, I pray prayers that are more general, but then in our prayer meeting, we bring our supplications.
      - Let us learn to pray in both ways.

TRANS> But there are other varieties in prayer also...there are different venues for prayer...

2. For example, you are to pray in public as well as in private.
  - a. There are some, like the Pharisees, who only prayed public prayers because their primary reason for praying was to make a show.
    - Perhaps some of you join us for our weekly prayer meeting here at church, but seldom pray in private at home!
    - The solution is not to stop praying in public, but start praying in private also!

- We are told of how our Lord often went away into solitude to pray, and to the Pharisees who loved to make a show of prayer,
    - His counsel was,
      - Matthew 6:6: But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
- b. But I have met others who have no use for the public prayers of God's people.
- They seem to think that unless their own mouth is the mouth that is praying, they are not praying.
    - Or they think that prayer is to be a private thing...
    - Yet, we read of Jesus praying with His disciples and instructing them to pray corporate prayers.
  - In Acts we read of many examples in which the church gathers together to pray...
    - In Acts 2, we are told that "the prayers" was one of the things the new believers continued steadfastly in...
    - In Acts 4, after Peter and John are released from custody, the disciples gather and lift up corporate prayers to the Lord.
    - In Acts 12 we find them gathered in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark to pray...
    - And in 1 Timothy 2 when Paul is giving instructions about how to behave in the church, he commands that men pray in every place—
      - every place referring to the assembly as is made clear by the injunction that follows that a woman is to be silent in the assembly...
3. There are yet other varieties of prayer of which you are to make you use of...
- a. There are set prayers.
- We are told that Daniel was in the habit of praying three times a day.
  - You also need to set aside specific times for the purpose of focused deliberate prayer...
    - Just as we set aside time to eat or time to go to work, so we need to set aside time for prayer.
    - If you don't it probably won't happen.
- b. Yet, prayer also needs to be offered up spontaneously as you go about your business...
- A godly person knows that he is continually dependent on God.

- Nehemiah is a great example of this...
  - He is in the middle of things and he frequently is seen to turn His thoughts to God—
    - to ask the Lord for help in a time of difficulty...
    - to ask Him to take notice of him,
    - or to give thanks.
- c. You can see how both set prayer and spontaneous prayer are essential in the day of evil—when Satan launches temptation at you...
  - Having already prayed for God to keep you from temptation in the morning,
    - you then renew that prayer in the moment when temptation strikes!
      - In the heat of the battle!
    - Just lift up your eyes to the Lord as soon as you find your heart drawn out to evil and say,
      - as in Psalm 141, “
        - Ps 141:4: Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice wicked works With men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.
      - Many times a prayer like that will be the difference between falling or standing!

TRANS> The whole point of this directive is that you are to avail yourself of every sort of prayer—

- You need God’s help. Without it you will not be able to stand.
  - Get all the help you can!
    - Pray generally and pray specifically...
    - Pray publicly and pray privately
    - Pray at set times and pray spontaneously.
    - That is the second directive.

### **III. The third directive is that you are to pray in the Spirit.**

- A. You see that verse 18 instructs you to make all your prayers and supplications “in the spirit.”
  - 1. It is impossible to tell from the grammar if this refers to the Holy Spirit or if it is saying that our spirit (not just our lips) is to be engaged when we pray.
    - a. Now you may have noticed that the word **Spirit** is capitalised in some English Bibles,

- but that is really no help...
  - There are no capitalisations in the original...
  - That is just a decision of the translation committee...
- b. Nor is there in help in the fact that the definite article is used here—that it says we are to pray in “**the** Spirit” rather than “in spirit,”
- The definite article is not found in the original,
    - but in Greek, its absence in this case does not indicate that it is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, which requires the definite article when translated into English.
- c. Nor is there any help from other passages...
- 1) In Jude 1:20, we are told expressly to pray in the **Holy** Spirit,
    - but in 1 Corinthians Paul says he will pray not only with his mouth, but also with his spirit.
    - So we have examples directing us to pray in the Holy Spirit and examples directing us to pray in spirit—in our own spirit...
  - 2) Yet, in a way, this is a help... because it means we can't go far wrong...
    - If we view this as calling us to pray in the Holy Spirit, we will be true to what God wants...
      - and if we view it as calling to pray in spirit—with our heart—we will also be true to what God requires of us.
2. So for my part, I want to look at this in both ways.
- It is a call to be sure that your heart or spirit is praying when your lips or the lips of the one leading in prayer pray...
  - And it is a call to be sure that you are praying as one who is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- B. When you put these together, it means that you need to see to it your prayers are truly engaged...with yourself and with God!
1. You are to take care that your prayers arise out your sincere and honest desires...
    - and that they are in accord with God's Spirit who gives us holy affections and who reveals God's promises in scripture.
    - You see, we don't know how to pray as we ought and the Spirit helps us in our infirmities...
      - He is the one who stirs up a true desire for prayer and the One who helps us purify our desires.
      - He is the One who gives us pure and holy desires.

2. And so you see how the two go together...
  - The Spirit enables you to have godly desires in your spirit to lift up to God...
  - You really can't pray in your spirit without God's Spirit.
  - God promises to give us the Spirit of grace and supplication so that our prayer will reach His throne,
    - and that is what this injunction is calling us to see that we have...
  
3. But how can you see to it that his is so?
  - Well, Jesus tells you that if you ask for the Holy Spirit, He will give Him to you.
  - If you find that you have no heart for prayer, pray that the Spirit will work in you to give you an earnest desire for prayer—
    - to show you how much you need to pray and to get you praying!
    - to turn from your sin and your own way and to seek God's face.

TRANS> So that is the third directive—to pray in the Spirit...

#### **IV. The fourth directive is that we are to pray with watchfulness...**

A. You see what it says in our text...

- praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, **being watchful to this end.**
  - What is meant by “being watchful to this end?”
1. Well first, let's look at the word **watchful**.
    - This is the word *agrupnew* which literally means no sleep—it is the word sleep with a negator in front ...
      - We are being told to not sleep when it comes to prayer.
    - Now sometimes this can be taken quite literally...
      - When Jesus commanded His disciples to watch with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane and to pray that they did not enter into temptation,
        - they kept falling asleep.
        - They did not watch with Him.
        - They did not stay awake in order to pray in the hour when the needed especially to pray.
    - But of course, you don't have to fall asleep to be less than alert in prayer as you all well know!

- There are many prayers that are offered up to God by those who dull and oblivious to the real need that is around them.
- And there are many more particular prayers that are never offered up at all because it never occurs to your sleepy head to pray for the situation.

2. Now I want you to notice the words, **to this end** that are added on here...

- It says you are to be watchful **to this end**...
  - to **what** end?
- Well surely to the end that you might always pray with all prayer in supplication in the Spirit!
  - In other words, you are to be alert to what is going on around you so that you will be able to pray intelligently!
  - You are not to be like the disciples of John I mentioned before,
    - diligently fasting and praying for the Messiah to come when He was standing right there working miracles among them!
    - Nor are you to be like the person who prays for the Mercedes (or for Prince Charming to show up in your life, or for whatever you crave)
      - without noticing that your soul is so barren and unfruitful that you are almost dead—spiritually!
      - I tell you, there are a lot of people who pray for things—even things that are lawful—
        - when they ought to be praying for something else—but they are not alert or watchful so as to see their real need!
        - There they are, praying for someone who is sick—which is find thing to do—when they don't even bother to pray for their salvation...
          - Often, both the sick person and the one praying for the sick person need more than anything to be reconciled to God.
          - But this is not taken notice of!
            - All that is seen is the physical sickness.
            - Here is a person who is awake as to the things of the world, but not to the things of the Spirit.

B. So my brothers and sisters, you are to be on the look out for the things you need to praying for!

1. You are to actually look for things that you ought to pray for...

- a. You are to see it when the church you are in is dangerously drifting—so that you might pray about it!

- You are to see the needs in your denomination, in your city, in your country.
  - You must be alert so you will know what to pray for.
- b. You are to be watchful over your own soul so that you recognise when temptation comes—that you might pray for escape!
- You are to pay attention to the dangers and temptation around you so that you will know when the evil day comes and be ready to meet it with prayer!
- c. You are to be watchful over those under your care—
- watchful over your children so that you will know how to pray for them... so that you will see if they are drifting or rebelling...
  - to your wife... so that you will see if she is struggling and know how to pray intelligently for her...
  - to those under your care as an officer in the church...
- d. You are to come to prayer meeting looking for things that you can be praying for... that is watchfulness.
2. I fear that many of us just go into prayer without much consideration of what is really going on around us and with out regard for what is really needed!
- You need to be attuned to God’s Word where you are told what really matters—and what is important to pray about!
  - When you realise how important prayer is—
    - it will change the way you pray!
    - You will be on the look out for things to pray about instead of being dull and sluggish.
  - A soldier that does not see the danger when the enemy comes to attack is the soldier that is likely the fall...
    - When the watchman is asleep, the city is taken by surprise and is unable to cry for help.

TRANS> So be ever watchful to the end that you might be always busy about prayer.

- That is the fourth directive of prayer.

**V. The fifth directive is that you are to pray with all perseverance and supplication.**

A. This is very strongly stated...

1. First of all, the word translated perseverance is a very strong word that means “to continue steadfastly.”
  - a. The root of this word means “to endure,”
    - And then is has a prefix added to strengthen in so at to mean to endure steadfastly or unremittingly!
  - b. This is actually the only place this word is used as a noun, but it occurs in the form of a verb ten times in the New Testament.
    - This verbal form is used in Acts 2:42 where we are told that those who were converted at Pentecost
      - “**Continued steadfastly** in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
    - It appears in Acts 6:4 where the deacons are appointed in order to assist the elders in order that the elders might
      - give themselves **continually** to prayer.
    - It is interesting to note that this word is used in the New Testament more often with reference to continuance in prayer than anything else.
      - There are several other examples that could be given.

TRANS> This is a very strong word is employed in our text to tell you to keep on with your praying!

2. But in our text (in Eph 6:18), this very strong word is actually strengthened even more.
    - You are not just told to pray with perseverance,
    - You are told to pray with **all perseverance!**
    - Not just *some* perseverance, but all perseverance!
- B. Surely this strong emphasis is given because of our constant tendency to neglect prayer.
1. I am ashamed to even preach about this because I know how negligent I am in this duty!
    - Brothers and sisters, you need to hear this exhortation to continuance in prayer!
    - You need to take every opportunity to pray!
    - I am so glad that since we changed the schedule of our prayer meeting, there has been a better attendance to the public prayers of the church...

- But how are your private prayers?
- Do you set aside time for this most crucial discipline?
- Do you continue steadfastly in prayer?
- Do you pray with all perseverance?

2. The Apostle Paul speaks of labouring in prayer.

- Prayer is not an easy thing to do—it is labour—it is difficult to stay at it—it is difficult to concentrate in it...
- No doubt, that is why he calls it labour...
- And no doubt that this the reason for this strong exhortation to continue.
  - And for so many other exhortation throughout the scripture to be constant in prayer.

3. Bothers and sisters, don't you understand?

- Prayer the principle exercise of faith.
  - It is what faith does when faith is present—
  - When you have faith, you call on the name of the Lord and are saved!
- And not only is it the principle exercise of faith (Calvin said that)
  - It is also the chief means of obtaining God's blessing.
  - God's promises are like a tree with blessings on it, and it is by prayer that you shake the tree so that the blessings come down.
  - It is the way of obtaining God's help in the day of battle.
    - You will not know His saving help without it!
- Every tendency to weariness must be counteracted by a cheerful performance of the duty...
  - Calvin also said that.
  - You will cheerfully persevere when you come to realise how essential prayer is to your very survival and to that of your brethren.
  - Keep it up, brothers and sisters,
    - Keep it up with all perseverance and supplication!

TRANS> That is the fifth directive of prayer...

- The sixth is...

**VI. You are to pray for all the saints.**

A. Now you know what a saint is...

1. A saint is someone who is set apart to God by profession of faith—
  - a member of His church of Jesus Christ.
  - The word means “a holy one.”
2. By specifying that we are to pray for “all the saints”
  - Paul is not saying that we may not pray for those who are outside the church.
    - We are instructed by him in Timothy to pray for all men...
  - But the context of Ephesians 6:18 is the battle...
    - The idea is that we are to be constantly praying for our brothers to stand in the battle that we are engaged in as their comrades against Satan and all who are on His side.
    - We do not pray that those who are not saints would stand...
      - no indeed—we want them to fall!
      - They are standing in opposition to Christ—they are warring against Him and we want them to fall...
        - to die to what they are that they might be raised up in Christ!
        - They need to die so that they can live.
  - It is only for the saints that we pray that they may stand...
    - We do not need to know if they are true saints or only professing...
    - Our prayer is that they will stand in what they profess...
      - That they will stand in God’s covenant with faithfulness when the day of evil comes.

B. And I want you to notice that you are told to pray for all the saints.

1. This verse certainly does have the word “all” in it a lot...
  - just as we are to use **all** kinds of prayer...
  - and to pray at **all** times...
  - and to continue with **all** perseverance,
  - so we are to pray for **all** the saints.
2. Now of course this does not mean that you have to know every one by name...
  - a. You can pray prayers in general, of course, for all the saints, and well you should.
    - Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9 is a marvellous prayer for the entire visible church.

- As a member of the great assembly of God's people, Daniel confesses the sins of the church and prays for God's promised deliverance from captivity.
- So also we should pray for the entire church today...
  - for her faithfulness,
  - for her to have wisdom and discernment,
  - for her growth,
  - for her to have a growing understanding of what Christ has done
  - for her protection,
  - for her godliness,
  - for her forgiveness,
  - for her witness,
  - and for her to stand in the evil day.

TRANS> Those are prayers you can make for *all* the Saints...

b. But this call to pray for all surely has something else to say to us as well...

- namely, that we should pray for all kinds of saints...
  - 1) You should pray for little saints and big saints,
    - For the children of the church as well as the adults...
    - Oh how much we need to pray that our covenant children will stand.
      - It is so awful to see them grow up and turn from the Lord...
      - Is not our lack of pray in part to blame for this?
  - 2) You should pray for weak saints and strong saints...
    - some ignore the weak who need our prayers most... they disregard them as if they are not important.
    - others do not pray for the strong supposing that they don't need your prayers!
      - That is foolish—if they are strong, they are strong by God's grace!
      - If they are strong, they are the object of Satan's attack because they have an influence on others!
        - Many strong saints have fallen—did not David? did not Peter?
  - 3) You should pray for saints you like as well as saints you don't like...
    - Do you neglect prayer for some who rub you the wrong way?
      - This is not acceptable—you are to pray for all saints...
      - They may be arrogant, they may be hard to get along with—
        - pray for them then!

- They will cause harm to others in the church and affect the churches corporate witness—so pray for them!
- But also pray for those you like...
  - Do not be deceived by the fact that they are easy for you to get along with to think that they do not need your prayers.
  - Some only pray for those they are having problems with—personally—and neglect to pray for others...
    - That is very selfish...
      - You are to pray for all the saints—that they may be able to stand.

C. There is strong encouragement from our Lord to do so

1. We are told that He Himself, now that He is at God's right hand, "ever lives to make intercession for us!"
  - Isn't that marvellous?
    - He lives in order that He might pray for us!
    - What an encouragement for us to join our prayers to His!
      - You might say, but why—why if He is already praying for them?
      - Because He commands you too!
      - He calls you to join with Him in His prayers, lifting them up in His name that you might have the joy of being heard!
        - It is a part of your fellowship with Christ to pray for all the saints!
2. And not only that, but the Lord is pleased to answer such prayers!
  - a. Over and over we have folks coming to Jesus, praying for their children or praying for their servant...
    - and over and over Jesus responds.
  - b. This is a huge encouragement to us to pray for all the saints.
    - Our prayers are never wasted!

**Conclusion:**

So here you have six directives for prayer that have been given to you...

- That you pray in every season
- That you pray all sorts of prayers
- That you pray in the Spirit
- That you pray with watchfulness
- That you pray with all perseverance
- And that you pray for all the saints...

- Those are the directives.
- Now the question is,
  - What will you do with them?

Isn't it ridiculous to think that the Lord must urge us to pray—and to keep up our prayers?

- In Christ, the very fountain of God's grace is opened up to us!
- We have this incredible resource, these incomparable riches—
  - all opened to us through Jesus Christ,
  - and we have to prodded in order to avail ourselves of this marvellous treasure.

My brothers and sisters,

- Please stand, and let us cry out to God and ask Him to pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication that we may earnestly follow these directives...