

129 - Praying and Being Watchful - Ephesians 6:18 - 2017-02-26

Call to Worship: Psalm 5:1-2

Scripture Reading: ~~Psalm 5:3-12~~ Matthew 26:36-46

Sermon: "Praying and Being Watchful" Ephesians 6:18

Benediction: Jude 20-21

Ephesians 6:9-20 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (10) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (13) 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. (14) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (18) **praying [G4336 *proseuchomai*]** always with all **prayer [G4335 *proseuche*]** and **supplication [G1162 *deesis* from G1189]** in the Spirit, **being watchful [G69 *agrupneo* to be sleepless]** to this end with all perseverance and **supplication [G1162 *deesis* from G1189]** for all the saints-- (19) 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, (20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Colossians 4:1-4 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (2) **Continue earnestly [G4342 *proskartereo*]** in **prayer [G4335 *proseuche*]**, **being vigilant [G1127 *gregoreuo* to keep awake]** in it with thanksgiving; (3) meanwhile **praying [G4336 *proseuchomai*]** also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, (4) that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be **serious [G4993 *sophroneo*]** and **watchful [verb G3525 *nepho*]** in your **prayers [G4335 *proseuche*]**.

Matthew 26:41 **Watch [G1127 *gregoreuo* to keep awake]** and **pray [G4336 *proseuchomai*]**, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Luke 21:36 **Watch [G69 *agrupneo* to be sleepless]** therefore, and **pray [G1189 *deomai*]** always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

To stand instead of to fall or to run away requires that we be strong in the Lord; to be more precise, that we be *strengthened* in the Lord, in His mighty power. This the Lord's apostle has expressed to us vividly as "putting on the whole armor of God."

The first half of this letter, Ephesians, teaches us to know and believe the truth about the great salvation God has worked for us in love, in mercy, in mighty power, and so glorify the grace of God, as given to us in Jesus Christ and by His Holy Spirit.

The second half of this letter, Ephesians, teaches us to know and do the will of God, instead of doing what we used to do, and what we are still tempted to do by the world, the devil, and our own flesh.

- I. To Learn What Paul Means Here, Come with Me to the Mountain in Galilee - Matthew 6
 - A. Hear how our Lord Jesus taught us to pray; understand by that the purpose of prayer and when a disciples of Christ would pray
 1. Hallowed be Thy name: pray when you would be tempted to give some glory to God and some to man, so that you will give all glory to God
 2. Thy will be done: pray when you would be tempted to do your own will instead of God's, so that you will do God's will
 3. Let us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (or the evil one): pray when your natural course would be to enter into temptation, so that God will save you from such evil, or from the evil one
 - B. What, then, does Paul mean in Ephesians 6:18 by teaching us to pray and be watchful?
 1. he has taught us to give all glory to God; now we must pray that He will grant us actually to Hallow His name
 2. he has taught us to know and do the will of God; now we must pray that He will grant us actually to do His will
 3. he has taught us that all the spiritual forces of evil will be attacking us, tempting us to disbelieve and disobey; now we must pray that God will lead us, so that we do not fall into temptation, but are delivered from evil by His hand
- II. To Learn What Paul Means Here, Come with Me to the Garden of Gethsemane - Matthew 26
 - A. Jesus' disciples
 1. Their command from the Lord: watch and pray
 - a) that you not fall into temptation
 - b) the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak
 2. Their conduct
 - a) did not watch and pray
 - b) fell into temptation
 - (1) wrongly became violent
 - (2) denied even knowing Christ

B. Jesus Himself

1. His prayer
 - a) Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.
 - b) Thy will be done.
2. His conduct: He did not fall into temptation

C. Note

1. the righteous desire to do the will of God in the inner man, in the spirit
2. the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak
3. we, therefore, are to watch and pray, that we not enter into temptation
4. what is our prayer to be, then?
 - a) not as I will, but as Thou wilt
 - b) Thy will be done

III. To Learn What Paul Meant Here, Come with Me to Paul's Rented House in Rome - Colossians 4

- A. verses 2-4 see that we have the same exhortation to prayer and watching
- B. that means the armor of God must be right before this, right? No, look, conduct of masters is right before
- C. what about chapter 3?
 1. verse 5 put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (All those varieties of sexual sin.)
 2. verse 8 put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth
 3. verse 9 Do not lie to one another
 4. Colossians 3:12-13 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; (13) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.
 5. Colossians 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
 6. Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.
 7. Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
 8. Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
 9. Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.
 10. Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

11. Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.
12. Colossians 3:22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.
13. Colossians 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.
14. Colossians 4:2-4 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; (3) meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, (4) that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

D. Note

1. the Spirit of God has changed your spirit inside you, so that you love the law of the Lord in your inner man; your spirit is willing to do the will of God
2. but the flesh is weak; in fact, the flesh is the very seat of the temptations to do evil

- I. The Lord Jesus Taught Us This in the Lord's Prayer
- II. The Lord Jesus Taught Us This in the Garden of Eden
- III. Peter Taught Us This in His Letters
- IV. Paul Taught Us This in His Prison Letters
- V.

I. To Watch and Pray

- I. This Doctrine Is the Word of Our Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - A. The great Pray-er will offer the great prayer
 - B. He commands that His disciples do likewise
 - 1. they do not in that moment
 - 2. they do later
 - a) see Acts
 - b) see the epistles
 - c) see the church through the ages
- II. This Doctrine Is the Way of Holy Living

JRY:

If we would do His will instead of the will of our flesh, that must be prayed for.

Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done"

Gethsemane: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." "Thy will be done."

praying always [ESV at all times]

Calvin:

To call upon God is the chief exercise of faith and hope; and it is in this way that we obtain from God every blessing.

But what is the meaning of always? Having already spoken of continued application, does he twice repeat the same thing? I think not. When everything flows on prosperously, — when we are easy and cheerful, we seldom feel any strong excitement to prayer, — or rather, we never flee to God, but when we are driven by some kind of distress. Paul therefore desires us to allow no opportunity to pass, — on no occasion to neglect prayer; so that praying always is the same thing with praying both in prosperity and in adversity.

Poole:

i.e. in every opportunity, so often as our own or others' necessities call us to it, 1Th_5:17

with all prayer and supplication

Poole:

prayer, when opposed to supplication, seems to signify petitioning for good things, and supplication the deprecating of evil, 1Ti_2:1.

in the Spirit

Geneva:

That holy prayers may proceed from the Holy Spirit

Poole:

the Holy Spirit of God, by whose assistance we pray, Rom_8:26,27 Jude 1:20

being watchful to this end [ESV: To that end keep alert]

Poole:

to prayer, in opposition to sloth and security: see Mat_26:41 Col_4:2 1Pe_4:7

with all perseverance and supplication [alert with all perseverance, making supplication]

Calvin:

Every tendency to weariness must be counteracted by a cheerful performance of the duty. With unabated ardor we must continue our prayers, though we do not immediately obtain what we desire.

Poole:

constancy and continuance in prayer in every condition, adverse as well as prosperous, though prayer be not presently answered, Luk_18:1.

for all the saints and for me

Calvin:

There is not a moment of our life at which the duty of prayer may not be urged by our own wants. But unremitting prayer may likewise be enforced by the consideration, that the necessities of our brethren ought to move our sympathy. And when is it that some members of the church are not suffering distress, and needing our assistance? If, at any time, we are colder or more indifferent about prayer than we ought to be, because we do not feel the pressure of immediate necessity, — let us instantly reflect how many of our brethren are worn out by varied and heavy afflictions, — are weighed down by sore perplexity, or are reduced to the lowest distress. If reflections like these do not rouse us from our lethargy, we must have hearts of stone. But are we to pray for believers only? Though the apostle states the claims of the godly, he does not exclude others. And yet in prayer, as in all other kind offices, our first care unquestionably is due to the saints.

Poole:

not only for ourselves, but for our brethren in the world, none being in so good a condition but they may need our prayers.

Pattison:

to confine it to their need of divine aid in the successful use of the panoply just described, is without warrant

Colossians 4:2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Poole:

endeavouring to keep the heart in all fit seasons unto this, as a help to the precedent and subsequent duties

Clarke:

This was the apostle's general advice to all; without this, neither wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, nor masters, could fulfill the duties which God, in their respective stations, required of them.

Ferguson:

The exercise of prayer is necessary for the right performance of commanded duties, it being a mean in the use whereof covenanted strength and influence is conveyed unto us, Matthew 7:7, without which we can do nothing; for unto the former exhortations he subjoineth, “Continue in prayer.”

Ephesians 5:22 - 6:20	Colossians 3:18 - 4:4
Eph 5:22-27 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. . . .	Col 3:18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Eph 5:28-33 . . . husbands ought to love their own wives . . .	Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives . . .
Eph 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. . .	Col 3:20 Children, obey your parents . . . for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
Eph 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children . . .	Col 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children . . .
<p>Eph 6:5-8 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh . . .</p> <p>(6) not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ,</p> <p>doing the will of God from the heart, (7) with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,</p> <p>(8) knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.</p>	<p>Col 3:22-25 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh,</p> <p>not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.</p> <p>(23) And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,</p> <p>(24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. (25) But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.</p>

<p>Eph 6:9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven . . .</p>	<p>Col 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.</p>
<p>Eph 6:10-17 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. (11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (13) 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. (14) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, (15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God</p>	
<p>Eph 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful . . .</p>	<p>Col 4:2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant . . .</p>
<p>Eph 6:19 . . . 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,</p>	<p>Col 4:3a . . . praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ,</p>
<p>Eph 6:20a for which I am an ambassador in chains . . .</p>	<p>Col 4:3b for which I am also in chains,</p>
<p>Eph 6:20b . . . that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.</p>	<p>Col 4:4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.</p>

Calvin:

Having instructed the Ephesians to put on their armor, he now enjoins them to fight by prayer. This is the true method. To call upon God is the chief exercise of faith and hope; and it is in this way that we obtain from God every blessing.

Trapp:

Prayer is not only a part of the armour, but enables to use all the rest.

Henry:

We must join prayer with all these graces, for our defence against these spiritual enemies, imploring help and assistance of God

Gill:

The last weapon is prayer

Clarke:

The apostle does not put praying among the armor; had he done so he would have referred it, as he has done all the rest, to some of the Grecian armor; but as he does not do this, therefore we conclude that his account of the armor is ended, and that now, having equipped his spiritual soldier, he shows him the necessity of praying, that he may successfully resist those principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and the spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places, with whom he has to contend.

Hodge:

The connection of this verse is with $\sigma\tau\eta\tau\epsilon$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu$ of Eph_6:14. “Stand, therefore, with all prayer and supplication, praying on every occasion, in the Spirit.”

Eadie:

We cannot agree with de Wette and others in regarding prayer as a separate weapon, for the apostle now drops the figure. It is indeed an effectual means of repulse, not by itself, but in its connection with all these other graces. So that we understand this verse as describing the spirit or temper in which the armour should be assumed, the position taken, the enemy met, and the combat pursued, that is, as still connected with $\sigma\tau\eta\tau\epsilon$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu$.

Barnes:

It would be well for the soldier who goes forth to battle to pray - to pray for victory; or to pray that he may be prepared for death, should he fall. But soldiers do not often feel the necessity of this. To the Christian soldier, however, it is indispensable. Prayer crowns all lawful efforts with success and gives a victory when nothing else would. No matter how complete the armor; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph.

Spurgeon:

When you cannot use your sword, and even when you can hardly grasp your shield, you can pray. That weapon of “all prayer” is of the handiest kind, because it can be turned in any and every direction.

Think how those two things are two of the things our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray:

Hallowed be Thy name

Thy will be done on earth

Naturally, then, when the Lord's apostle has taught us what to believe, that we may give all glory to the grace of God in Jesus Christ; and has taught us what to do, that we may obey the will of God, he then teaches us to pray for ourselves and for one another, that we may believe and do as we have been taught, against all temptations not to.