

THE WARFARE OF PRAYER

EPHESIANS 6:10-18

Text: Ephesians 6:10-12, 18

Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Introduction:

In a small Kentucky town there were 2 churches and 1 whiskey distillery which was owned by the town atheist.

Church members complained that the distillery gave the community a bad image so they unsuccessfully tried to shut it down.

One Saturday night they held a joint prayer meeting during which a terrible storm raged for hours. Lightning struck the distillery and it burned to the ground.

The next morning both pastors preached on the 'POWER OF PRAYER'.

The insurance company decided to not pay for the damages due to the 'act of God' clause in the policy so the distillery owner sued both churches for conspiring with God to destroy his building.

In court both churches denied any involvement in causing the fire.

A CONFUSED JUDGE said, 'I find one thing about this case very complexing:

The plaintiff (an atheist) is professing belief in the power of prayer and the defendants (church members) are denying that same power.

Undoubtedly there is power in prayer. The pages of this Bible are filled with the proof. There is proof in the biographies of many great Christians, there should be proof in your life and in the life of this church and any other that names the name of JESUS CHRIST!

Prayer is not meant to be one of many activities we engage in as a church or one of many ministries you as a Christian can become involved in. PRAYER IS LIKE BREATHING! It is a part of every activity we do, without it we could not continue with any success for the kingdom of God.

Prayer is the very power of the Christian life. It was not given to be a start or an end to our meetings.

Many people have dropped prayer from their life because it is too cumbersome an activity, demands too much time or energy.

“A SOLDIER MIGHT AS WELL DROP HIS RIFLE AND AMMUNITION BECAUSE IT IS TOO BURDENSOME!”

Someone once said, “The world does not fear the church, it barely tolerates it. It considers the church no longer a player in the world affairs and only an observer.

The church is a quaint old relic of the past that lends a certain charm to a neighborhood, a holdover from bygone days, big but harmless, like a beached whale.

Notice:

1. CALLING (VS. 10)

Ephesians 6:10

¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

We have a calling to pray because without prayer we have no strength.

In the year 1857 America was in both an economic and a spiritual crisis.

Attendance in church had dwindled.

It was during this time that God put a vision in the heart of a man named Jeremiah Lanphier. It was a vision of starting a noontime prayer meeting at a mission on Fulton Street in New York City.

He spend much time advertising the first meeting but when he showed up on September 23, 1857 no one seemed to be coming. At 12:30 one man came, then another, and another and there was a total of six that first day.

The numbers increased until by October 14 over a hundred were coming.

Other buildings were needed; churches opened their doors as thousands were now coming each day.

By March of 1858, a theater which held over 3,000 was overflowing and fire and police stations were requested to help with room.

The prayer meetings spread outside New York City throughout New England and across the entire nation.

The prayer meetings of 1857 became the revival of 1858 in which many, many thousands were saved.

3 years later war would break out and many lives would be lost from this world but because of a revival which began with prayer they would slip into eternity with a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Note:

Common things about a person who is WEAK in prayer:

- They rarely pray
- They pray faithless prayers
- They pray without a knowledge of God's will (no target)

Someone once said:

“We pray weak prayers because we don't comprehend God's promises concerning the release of supernatural power through prayer.”

Prayer brings God's power to our battles.

Someone else once said:

“What a man is in his prayer closet is what he really is. The kind of church we are is seen by our prayers. It is the best indicator of our spiritual condition!”

2. CONFLICT (VS. 12)

Ephesians 6:12

¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Conflict which is constant

Prayer is wrestling

There is nothing more tiring than wrestling. It demands strength, skill, endurance, and knowledge of your opponent.

You may have been born in a hospital but you were born again on a battlefield.

I am afraid that the last thing on most believers minds as they wake up to a new day is that this is another day of battle in which pray is the weapon of victory.

“The church becomes powerless when it becomes prayerless”

Note:

There are 5 indicators of a prayer life that is not fervent.

- An absence of love for the Word and Work of God

For many instead of a home for God's Word our hearts are like hotel's and check-out time is 12 o'clock each Sunday

- A lukewarmness for the things of God
- A casual attitude towards the Will of God
- An absence of commitment to pray
- A love for the world's ways and affection for the world's things

Illustration:

A fellow was describing how that when he was a young boy he was daily bothered by a bully. Each day his lunch money was demanded from him.

He decided to learn self defense and went to sign up for a class.

When he found out that the cost for each lesson was \$5 he decided that it was cheaper to just continue to pay the bully.

The same is true for many today. They have decided it is just easier to go along with the world rather than put up a fight and the cost of doing such.

3. CHALLENGE (VS. 11)

Ephesians 6:11

¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“That YOU may be able to stand against the wile of the devil”

The wiles of the devil are constantly attacking our faith and faithfulness.

The devil desires to control these things available to man:

- Minds
- Morals
- Motives
- Manners

- Materials
- The wiles of the devil includes times and seasons
 - Satan tempted our Saviour right after His baptism
 - Satan tempted David at the time when kings went to battle (2 Samuel 11:1)
- The wiles of the devil include tactics and snares
 - Satan attacks, allures, and accuses
 - The wiles of the devil includes appeal
 - Satan appeal to our appetites
 - Satan appeals to our ambition (1 John 2:15, Gen. 3, Matt. 4)
 - Satan appeals to our allegiance (Matt. 4)
- The wiles of the devil includes tragedy and successes

4. COMMAND (VS. 18)

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Paul says prayer is not an option to consider but a command to obey.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

¹⁷ Pray without ceasing.