

## **Prayer Instruction. Night 6.**

1. A Place and a pattern of prayer.
2. Praise in prayer. 'We enter His courts with Thanksgiving' Ps. 100:4
3. Confession in prayer. 'If I have regarded iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear my prayer.' Ps. 66:18  
Praying for our Enemies. Matt. 5:44
4. Ask for Anything; the True Vine Discourse. John 15
5. **Spiritual Armor, Warfare. Eph. 6:10-18**

**'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

**Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.**

**Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth (Is. 11:5), and having put on the breastplate of righteousness (Is. 59:17), and having shod your feet with the gospel of peace (Is.**

**Turn to Rev. 2. (The Church at Ephesus). Rev. 2:1-7**

**In 1979, John MacArthur preached a sermon titled, Satan's Attacks Against a Spirit-filled church.** This was about 10 years into his pastorate. In that sermon he says, 'when I showed up to this church it was like a honeymoon, and with all the sermon preparation, and preaching and teaching, what was a honeymoon turned into work, and I said to myself, this isn't a honeymoon this is work, but then after some time passed, I realized it wasn't a honeymoon and it wasn't work, it was war. We are in a spiritual war.'

**There are only 7 churches in the entire world.** They are each identified in Rev. 2-3. I firmly believe this. Then and now, 1st century churches are mere archetypes of the follow-on spirit of the age.

The church at Ephesus, the Ephesians, had an All-Star cast. Paul planted (the greatest church planter ever), Apollos watered (arguably the greatest oratorical, theologically sound preacher ever), The Apostle John (arguably the greatest evangelist ever). \*Talent IS NOT enough! Gifts are NOT enough! God gives Gifts, He evaluates FRUIT!

**Did the church have any problems?** Only one. They left their first love.

Jesus Christ says to the church at Ephesus, Return to Him, Repent to Him, and Remember Him. **(Return, Repent, Remember) - 'or else'** Q: Or else what? Or else I will put your lampstand out! I'll do away with your church.

**(Theological point, Ecclesiology, εκκλησια,) The Church Triumphant, The Church Militant.**

The Church in its fully glorified state in Heaven without sinful impediments.

The Church militant is the on-going battles that we are faced with in this world. Those battles can be categories three ways; **The World, The Flesh, and The Devil.**

This instruction in prayer **(v.18,19)** actually tells us that we have the ability to stand firm **(v.11,v.13,14)** and resist all three, if we do these things.

To be as simple as possible, these two things are remaining in the Word **(v.17)** and our Christian character **(v.14-17)**.

If the devil, by his schemes and craftiness can get a group of people to move off the Word then the devil has conquered that spiritual terrain. If the devil is not able to do that, the devil will attack Christian character. BUT, **'we are not unaware of the devils schemes' 2 Cor. 2:11**

**Finally.**

This is the last instruction that Paul gives the church at Ephesus. Leading up to this last point, Paul has given detailed instructions on doctrine and practice in the church. Ch. 1-3 is doctrinal, Ch. 4-6 is applicational.

**Be strong.**

**Q: How?**

**In the Lord.**

In Christ. Union with Christ. That our identity and personal image is Jesus Christ. Our first love. Our first prayer. Our focus. Be in the Lord. This is where all spiritual strength and all spiritual virtue is derived.

**In the Strength of His might.**

The only way this is going to happen is by focusing on Christ and Christ being the source of your wisdom and strength.

**Put on the full armor of God.**

What is this full armor? It is spiritual armor and weaponry. Spiritual armor is not physical in nature. Spiritual things are literal things, but they are often intangible, 'I just can't put

my finger on it'....Spiritual things are made tangible by thoughts, thoughts form words, words for concepts, and concepts are lived in our lives.

And therein, becomes the warfare. - There is no Spiritual neutrality in this world. None! You are either with Christ or against Him.

**So that.**

Why should you put this on and pursue this armor?

**You will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.**

The devil and all those enlisted in his service has orders to scheme against you and against Christ's church. These things are done by craftiness, cunning, coercion, manipulation, deceit, subversion, ungodly alliances etc. **'we are not unaware of his schemes' 2 Cor. 2:11**

**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.**

That's referring to people. **'Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God' 2 Cor. 10:5**

It is an interesting position, but we don't fight people, though Satan works through people.

So people, who are pawns of Satan are most certainly his agents, but they are not our struggle.

But against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

**Rulers, Powers, World Forces, Spiritual Forces.**

**Rulers.** Αρχας , archas, beginning, ruler, chiefs, heads of organizations, 'the one by which the process began' (BDAG)

**Powers.** Εχουσιας, Authority, a person who has privileged decision-making, the ones who have the ability and capability to cause results.

**World forces.** Κοσμοκρατορας, cosmic powers, world-rulers, politicians and business leaders, community leaders, major non-profit figureheads

**Spiritual forces.** Πνευματικα, pneumatika, non-carnal, ethereal, caused by spiritual power

**Of wickedness.** Depravity, baseless, malicious, sinful.

### **In Heavenly places.**

Every time the Bible uses the word heaven, it does not necessarily mean it is referring to the eternally dwelling place of the righteous, the place of paradise and complete absence of sin. Contextually, it fits into three understandings; **the Atmospheric heavens, the Planetary heavens, and The Proper location of Heaven.**

What Paul is talking about here is most likely the atmospheric heavens that is all around us and having constant engagement with us. These forces are all around us, all the time.

**Q:** So, how are you going to be able to stand against this? Prayer is imperative, but how?

### **Therefore.**

What's the therefore, therefore? It's the application of the point.

### **Take up the full armor of God.**

Not part of the armor, not one specified piece, not the part you are interested in, all of it. The full armor.

**The full armor of God** actually has a connection to **the full counsel of God**. Because the Armor and the Counsel, in essence are the same!

### **So that you will be able to resist in the evil day.**

What is the evil day? Paul's not referring to some future calendar day that is singled out for evil. Paul is referring to the day that these forces decide to make a deliberate stand against you.

**SO** - it is on that day, that if you have habituated the prayer life, and the character life, to 'resist' or 'stand firm' then on the evil day, you will effectively deal with those spiritual forces that are against you.

Character is not determined at the point of conflict it is revealed at the point of conflict. Character is determined by 100 different daily decisions made over 100's of days.

So look at this with regard to prayer.

### **V. 14. Stand firm therefore.**

1. Having girded your loins with truth.

Ok so as we looked at last time with John 15, 'anything you ask in My name, I will do' - these are those things.

**Do you want truth?** Ask for it. By the way, it will be very important for you that you have no matter of falsehood in you. **WHY?** No so that you look good as a Christian, but so that you can stand firm against the devil!

### **Gird/truth.**

Button yourself up with the truth. Collect yourself with the truth. Wrap yourself with the truth.

## **2. Having put on the breastplate of righteousness.**

Righteousness is another primary attribute of Jesus Christ/God.

This will work as a body armor to your spiritual life. Good luck penetrate the torso of a righteous spiritual life.

## **3. Shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.**

'As much as depends on you, live at peace with all men' Rom. 12

Walk in peace. We all have feet of clay. 'The seed of righteousness produces peace'

James 3:18 'Peacemakers who sow in peace reap in righteousness'

Peace DOES NOT mean an absence of conflict, it means an absence of unrighteousness.

You can have peace in the midst of conflict IF you are right with God. A lack of peace comes from a lack of communion with God.

'I will keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee' Isaiah 26:3

## **4. Take up the shield of faith.**

**Shield/Buckler.** A defensive weapon, a protective weapon. A weapon that guards your body. You well being.

**'Be ready to give a defense for the faith that is within you' 1 Pet. 3:15 - Apologetics.**

Faith is the substance of our Christian life. We must believe.

**'Love believes all things' 1 Cor. 13** - Not naively, not gullibility. Confidence in God's Love to overcome all things.

Rom. 8:28 **'All things work together for good for those who love the Lord'**

#### **5. Take helmet of salvation.**

##### **Story.**

**I know 3 different men that were shot in the head in combat by a 7.62 round. One of them it went through the back of their head and through their eye socket. The other two it hit them in the helmet. All survived.**

**It hurt for a little while, but the helmet saved their life.**

**Salvation works like a helmet in combat.** Salvation is combined with Faith in Christ and continues in the Righteousness of Christ.

#### **6. The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.**

The only weapon we are offered is a sword. This is the only weapon in the armory; what is it? God's Word.

The only way to use the weapon is to look the rounds into the mind and explain them with the mouth. To **'speak the truth, in love' Eph. 4:15**

The only form of Evangelism is telling people the truth of the Bible. There is no other form.

The Bible only knows one form of evangelism, the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

##### **Results.**

These are applications that we have set before us in prayer. V. 18,19 'all prayer and petition'

In other words, ask God for these things.

Wrap up with Q&A, comments, and prayer requests.