

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

Introduction

As we come to the conclusion of the book of Ephesians, Paul writes, "Finally..." His final and conclusive remarks are that the faithful saints in Ephesus need to be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. They need to put on the full armor of God, so that they can stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Church, there is a battle going on. There is a battle in the heavenly places. There is a battle here on earth. There is a battle in our minds. The battle has many fronts and it is taking place all around us. For us to walk in the good works that God has prepared for us to walk in, we are going to face opposition. For us to build the spiritual temple that God desires to build, we are going to face opposition. For us to walk in a worthy manner, we are going to face opposition. The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light are in opposition to one another.

You and I have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and have been brought into His marvelous light. You and I were held captive and have been rescued and set free. You and I walked in darkness, but now we walk in the light. We walked in the futility of our minds, but now walk in the Spirit and according to God's purposes. You and I were destined for wrath and were without hope, but now we have been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We have been challenged to lay aside the old self, and to put on the new self. We are encouraged to put on Christ. We took several weeks to examine this transformation that God desires in all of us. We saw that there was a battle in our minds that must be fought. Therefore, in the midst of this battle, we are to put on the full armor of God.

Jack Webb preached an excellent message on this passage a couple of weeks ago. If you did not hear that message, let me encourage you to get the CD. Our text for today is Ephesians 6:18-24. We are going to read our text, but, we will start with verse 10, so that our text is in proper context, and so that I can make a few concluding comments about the armor of God.

(Ephesians 6:10-24) "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. {11} Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. {12} 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. {13} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. {14} Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, {15} and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; {16} in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. {17} And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. {18} With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, {19} and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, {20} for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. {21} But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. {22} And I have sent him to you for this

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. {23}
Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
{24} Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible."

Before we get into our text today, there are a couple of thoughts that I want to share with you. First, in verse eleven, Paul tells us to put on the full armor of God. In verse thirteen, he tells us to take up the full armor of God. In verse fourteen, he mentions having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel. In verse sixteen he tells us to take up the shield of faith. In verse seventeen he says to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

We put on some parts

There are some parts of the armor of God that must be put on. There are other parts that must be taken up. The Greek word for put on is *enduo*, which means to clothe or sink into a garment. It is used 47 times in the New Testament, and three times in Ephesians. Two of those usages are in this passage. The third occurrence was in Ephesians 4:24, where we were told to put on the new self. Paul said to lay aside the old self....and to put on the new self.

G1746. *enduo*, en-doo'-o; from G1722 and G1416 (in the sense of sinking into a garment); to invest with clothing (lit. or fig.):--array, clothe (with), endue, have (put) on.

In the book of Galatians, Paul says that all who were baptized into Christ have clothed ourselves with Christ. When we receive Christ into our life, we *enduo* or clothe ourselves with Christ.

(Galatians 3:27) "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

We take up some parts

The other Greek word that Paul uses is *analambano*, which means to take up, or receive. The main root word is *lambano* (G2983), which means to take hold of. It is used thirteen times in the New Testament, and twice in the book of Ephesians, both times in this passage. Several of the times it refers to Jesus being taken up into heaven. There is a sense that God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit took hold of Jesus and brought Him back into heaven.

G353. *analambano*, an-al-am-ban'-o; from G303 and G2983; to take up:--receive up, take (in, unto, up).

There are some things that we wear and some things that we take hold of. We put on our pants and shirts. We wear them. Once I have put on my clothes, I don't think too much about my clothes anymore, unless I am eating spaghetti or chili. Then, I am careful to protect what I have put on. I may put on something else, like an old shirt or a napkin to protect my good clothing.

When I am at work, I take hold of a pen to write with. Some contracts and certificates require me to sign them with a blue pen. I keep two of them in my desk drawer. I take up a blue pen and sign a document with it. I may lay it down again. For me to continue using it, I have to continue

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

holding it. It is a conscious effort to keep holding it, whereas my clothing is not a conscious effort. Once I have put them on, I forget about them. Not so with the things that I take hold of.

For us to have the full armor of God, there are some things that must be put on, and there are some things that we must put on, and some things we must take hold of. Both actions are important. I believe

Put On The Full Armor of God	Take Up The Full Armor of God
Truth	Shield of faith
Breastplate of righteousness	Helmet of salvation
Preparation of the gospel of peace	Sword of the Spirit (word of God.)

We may not have on all the armor of God

Another point that I want to make is that Paul says to put on the full armor. There is a sense that we could have part of the armor and be vulnerable. There is a sense that we might have received Christ into our life, but not have the full armor of God. Paul is writing to the saints in Ephesus, to believers. He tells the believers to put on the full armor. If they, as believers, already had the full armor of God on, Paul would not be telling them to put it on.

Therefore, I do not think we should assume that we automatically have on the full armor of God. We must be diligent to put on and take up the full armor of God. We are in a battle, and we have a formidable opponent, and we must be fully armed and protected.

In the battle, some of you may have been assaulted with doubt. You need to take up the shield of faith and deflect those arrows. We deflect those with the shield of faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. We must take up this shield of faith, which comes by declaring God's rhema and word in the situation.

Some of us are assaulted with accusations. Some are assaulted with condemnation. We take up the shield of faith and declare that there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. I do not receive that condemnation. I am righteous and forgiven by the blood of Christ. We take up the shield of faith and deflect those arrows. We take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and deflect those thrusts of the enemy's sword. We defend ourselves with the armor of God.

Since I am not in the camp that believes that we already have on the full armor at all times, I believe we must put it on. We can do that in prayer times. We can have a time of confession. This is not a sin confession, but a confession of truth. It may go something like this:

Father, I put on the breastplate of righteousness. I declare that I am a righteous man. You became sin on my behalf that I might become the righteousness of God in You. Thank You for forgiving my sins. Thank You for cleansing me from all unrighteousness. Thank You for declaring me to be a saint, a holy one, a righteous man. I put on the breastplate of righteousness

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

right now.

For the preparation of the gospel, there are several ways to shod our feet with the gospel. Many Christians do not have their feet shod with the PREPARATION of the gospel. They do not have any Scriptures memorized. They do not know how to share the gospel with others. Shodding your feet with the preparation of the gospel may mean that you go to an equipping workshop in evangelism. Shodding your feet with the gospel may mean that you read some books. Shodding your feet with the preparation of the gospel may mean that you memorize some verses so that you are prepared to share these verses with people.

In my off seasons as a professional golfer, I used to review and re-memorize hundreds of verses that I thought would be useful in sharing with people. I was shodding my feet in the offseason. I did not do this every day. There were other things in shodding my feet that I needed to do daily.

Paul tells us to pray for open doors. Part of having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel is praying for open doors. We need to pray for boldness; that is being prepared. We need to pray for alertness. We need to ask God for divine appointments. That is all part of shodding our feet with the preparation of the gospel. These are things that we must do if we are going to have the full armor of God.

This brings us up to verse 18. I believe that verses 18-22 actually go with the message on the spiritual armor. However, I am covering verses 18-24 today as a concluding word. I have entitled the message today, Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts. First, he exhorts the Ephesians to pray. Second, he blesses them.

Subject: What are Paul's two concluding thoughts?

1. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to pray.
 - a. Paul tells them how to pray.
 - i. They are to pray with prayer and petitions.
 - ii. They are to pray with alertness and perseverance.
 - iii. They are to pray in the spirit.
 - iv. They are to pray specifically. (Boldness in sharing the gospel)
 - b. Paul tells them when to pray.
 - i. They are to pray at all times.
 - c. Paul tells them who to pray for.
 - i. They are to pray for all the saints.
 - ii. They are to pray for Paul.
2. Paul blesses the saints at Ephesus.
 - a. Paul blesses them with peace (vs 23).
 - b. Paul blesses them with love (vs 23).
 - c. Paul blesses them with grace (vs 24).

1. Paul Exhorts the Ephesians to Pray

First, Paul exhorts them to pray. His concluding words are to take up the full armor of God, pray, and then to be blessed. The prayer is in the context of battle. He has told them that the enemy, the ruler of this world, the spiritual forces of darkness are against us. Therefore, we are to take up our

armor, and to pray.

In this short passage, Paul shares specifically about three different topics of prayer. First, Paul shares how to pray. Second, Paul tells the Ephesians when to pray. Third, Paul tells them who to pray for.

A. How to Pray

Pray with prayer and petitions (supplications)

Paul mentions four different ways for the Ephesians to pray. First, he tells them to pray with prayer and petitions. There are two different Greek words used. The first Greek word is *proseuche*, which simply means to pray. Some have also suggested that this is oratory, meaning that it is a prayer offered out loud. The second Greek word is *deesis*, which comes from the root word, *deomai*. *Deomai* means to beg, petition or make request. The King James translates this as supplication. The English definition of supplication is a humble request or petition. I think this is really what *deesis* is implying. We are coming to God as a beggar, in a spirit of humility, bringing our requests to Him. We are praying to God, and we are also humbly bringing our requests before Him.

G1162. *deesis*, deh'-ay-sis; from G1189; a petition:--prayer, request, supplication. [G1189. *deomai*, deh'-om-ahee; mid. of G1210; to beg (as binding oneself), i.e. petition:--beseech, pray (to), make request. Comp. G4441.]

In some circles that I have been in, we demand that this be done or that be done. We demand it in the name of Jesus, but we demand it. The truth is that our prayers are directed towards God, who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is the Judge. We cannot come to Him in a demanding way. We come to Him through Jesus Christ, our Mediator. We come to Him, not on our own merit, but because He paid the price for our sins, and forgave us all our debts. We come to Him with humility, not with an arrogant, demanding attitude.

In Isaiah 66:2, we find that God looks at him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at His word. When we come to him in prayer, we need to come humbly, and in contriteness of spirit. We need to humbly offer our petitions.

(Isaiah 66:2) ""For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word."

Pray with alertness.

David Loveless is the Senior Pastor at Discovery Church in Orlando. I served under David for a number of years. David is a wonderful teacher and communicator. David shared one day how he got up in the morning to pray. He set his alarm in the bathroom, so he had to get up out of bed and go turn it off. He would splash cold water on his face to wake him up. Then, he went to a lonely place and would pray.

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

Paul says that we need to be on the alert. The King James says that we are to be watching. The night watch was when a person was supposed to be alert and watch for any signs of danger or of the enemy at night. To be watchful implies being alert and on the look-out. The Greek word is *agrupneo*, which means to be sleepless, or to keep awake.

G69. *agrupneo*, ag-roop-neh'-o; ultimately from G1 (as neg. particle) and G5258; to be sleepless, i.e. keep awake:--watch.

Some of you are more awake or more sleepless in the evening than in the morning. It may be best for you to pray in the evenings rather than in the morning. It is important to find a time when you can be alert. I usually wake up bright-eyed and bushy tailed. I do not need cold water in my face to pray. The mornings work great for me. If I try to pray at night, I will fall asleep praying. I usually fall asleep very quickly. It seems that as soon as I lay down it is morning and I am wide awake, ready for another day.

Another suggestion for being alert in prayer is to be well rested. God is mindful that we are but dust. He knows our frailties. He knows that we need our rest. He designed our bodies, and He designed them to require a certain amount of rest. Therefore, He wants you to get your rest. But, if you are going to make time for prayer, you will have to prioritize it, so that you are not giving up the rest that you need. Go to bed earlier to get up earlier. Give up a TV show to pray at night. Make sure you get your rest, rather than sacrificing your rest to pray. It will help you pray with alertness.

Pray out loud. It is more difficult to fall asleep while you are talking. It may be easier to pray out loud and be alert.

Walk while you pray. I have found this to be helpful to me at times.

Write down your prayers. I write prayer-mails to people. I can't remember falling asleep sending prayer-mails. I am pretty alert when writing or typing. I have fallen asleep at times writing things down. All at once, your pencil leaves a downward trail on the page as you drift off.

Pray with a partner. I really enjoy praying with Karen. We pray conversationally together, going back and forth.

Pray with perseverance.

Paul tells the Ephesians to pray with perseverance. How many of you receive what you pray for immediately every time? I have seen some immediate answers. I have seen some answers that happen over a brief time. However, there are many times that I have prayed for many years before seeing an answer.

Back in the mid 80's Karen and I were praying about getting out of debt. We were debt-free except our home mortgage. We asked God to help us pay off our house. We were praying that it would be paid off in seven years, the longest allowable debt in Scripture. While praying one morning, the Lord spoke to me about praying for it to happen in three years. This was a *rhema* word. Therefore, we began to pray for it to happen in three years. Almost three years to that day,

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

we received a phone call from Karen's grandfather asking us how much we owed on our house. We told him how much and he sent us a check to pay off our mortgage. We prayed persistently for several years before we saw an answer.

Just because a prayer is not answered immediately does not mean that it is not God's will. It could mean that, but it could also mean that you need to pray with perseverance.

You may be going through a tough season. Dale has gone through a very tough season, looking for work and scraping by. He has been praying and asking God for provision. He has had to pray with perseverance. He is not to stop praying. He is not to stop asking. He is to keep on knocking. He is to keep on asking. The doors will be opened, but he is going to have to persevere in prayer.

As I have looked at some of my prayers, it took years for some of them to be answered. As I look at this church plant, it may take a few years to get it firmly rooted, established and bearing much fruit. It is important that we fight a good fight, finish the course, and persevere in our prayers and in our faith.

Pray in the Spirit

Next Paul tells them to pray in the Spirit. He says, "with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit."

(Ephesians 6:18) "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,"

There are a couple of different views on how to interpret this, and I think that both are correct. Let me take a look at the cessationist viewpoint first. They say that this means to be led by the Spirit in our prayers. I agree wholeheartedly with this interpretation. Let me give you an example.

A couple of weeks ago I received an email from Dave Angier, telling me that my prayers have been right on target. I had been praying for specific things for him and their church plant that were definitely given to me by the Spirit. I was not praying in tongues or writing an email in a prayer language. I wouldn't know where to start or how to do it. It would be utterly gibberish to Dave if I could do it. He would not have been blessed and he could not have agreed with my prayers. I simply wrote out the prayers of my heart for his church. Granted, this is my third church plant, and I am very familiar with the different difficulties, frustrations, struggles, and challenges that come with planting a church. Therefore, I can pray more intelligibly because of my experience. But, I believe that my prayers were led by the Spirit.

Therefore, I agree with the ungifted and the cessationist view of praying in the spirit. There is another reason that I agree with this interpretation. Paul goes on to tell us who to pray for and what to pray about. If I am praying in the Spirit or in tongues, I have no clue about what or who I am praying about. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 14:2 that no one understands what a person speaking in tongues is saying. He says that he is speaking mysteries. Therefore, if we are told to pray about certain things for certain people, we do this with our minds. If we pray in tongues, we may or may not be praying about those things.

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

(1 Corinthians 14:2) "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries."

Now, let's take a look at the other view. The pentecostals and charismatics say that praying in the Spirit means praying in tongues. I agree wholeheartedly with this view. Let's take a look at why I also agree with this statement.

I believe it is a good practice to interpret Scripture with Scripture. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul goes on to say that we are to seek to abound for the edification of the church. The context is speaking, blessing, or praying in a tongue, which is an unknown language versus praying with the mind, with a known language that everyone can understand. Let's read it together.

(1 Corinthians 14:12-19) "So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. {13} Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. {14} For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. {15} What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also. {16} Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? {17} For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. {18} I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; {19} however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue."

Notice in verse fifteen that Paul concludes, "I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also." When he uses the term pray with the spirit, he means praying in tongues. So, when Paul uses the same term in Ephesians six, it is also good to interpret this with the same definition.

There is another passage that I want to bring up in regard to this thought. In Jude 1:20, he says that they are to build themselves up on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. One of the benefits of praying in the Spirit is that our faith is built up. There are many ways for us to be built up in our faith. Acts 20:32 commends us to the word of God, which is able to build us up. But, this verse is specifically talking about being built up by praying in the Holy Spirit.

(Jude 1:20) "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit;"

Let's go back to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14. He says that one who prophesies speaks to men for edification, exhortation, and consolation. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself. When people pray in the Spirit, they are built up. No one else around them is edified or built up, but they are. Paul writes that those who prophesy edify the church. The thrust of the passage is that in a corporate setting we are to seek things that edify the church, not ourselves. Praying in tongues edifies us individually, but not corporately. Prophesying edifies the corporate body.

(1 Corinthians 14:2-5) "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. {3} But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. {4} One who speaks in a

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. {5} Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying."

Therefore, Paul concludes that he would rather speak five words with my mind than ten thousand in a tongue, because he would rather have the church edified. He tells us to be mature in our thinking, not selfish and immature.

(1 Corinthians 14:18-20) "I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; {19} however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. {20} Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature."

The common thread of both Jude's letter and Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14 is that praying in the Spirit is praying in tongues, which edifies the body. We know in Ephesians that Paul tells us to pray in the Spirit. I think it is good to apply both interpretations. I pray being led by the Spirit, and I pray in the Spirit, or with tongues.

Let me give you just a few common experiences that I have had while praying in the Spirit. It is difficult for me to pray in the Spirit much without breaking into praise. I find myself moving into praise and worship almost immediately. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12 that "no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is going to exalt Jesus. The Holy Spirit is going to bless and exalt the Father. The Holy Spirit is going to lead us into praise and worship. This matches my own experience.

(1 Corinthians 12:3) "Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit."

Another common experience is that praying in the Holy Spirit releases other gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. I have received prophetic words for others while praying in the Spirit. I have received prophetic songs while praying in the Spirit. I have received many things from the Holy Spirit while praying in the Spirit. Let me encourage you to pray with your mind and pray with your spirit.

Let me give you one negative experience. I used to lead a quarterly prayer meeting among the churches in Acworth. We moved it around to different churches, and we had different denominations represented in the meeting. One time I instructed the members of our church to exercise restraint in the meetings. I asked them to pray with their minds so that everyone else could agree with them, and so that they would not give offense to those who were ungifted or did not believe in praying in tongues. Some of my members got upset with me. I felt like I was echoing Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14. God's desire is for the body to be edified more than the individual. God's desire is for unity and not to do anything which would cause my brother to stumble. I want our desires to match up with God's desires for the body.

Pray specifically.

Next, Paul tells the Ephesians to pray specifically. In verse nineteen, he asks them to pray that utterance would be given to him in the opening of his mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, and that he would proclaim the gospel boldly. These are very specific requests.

(Ephesians 6:19-20) "and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, {20} for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

In verses 21-22, Paul tells the Ephesians that he has sent Tychicus to them so that they would know about his circumstances, and to comfort their hearts. Why did he want them to know about his circumstances? So that they could pray specifically about his circumstances. The more we know about someone and their circumstances, the more specifically we can pray about their situation.

(Ephesians 6:21-22) "But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. {22} And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts."

I believe that it is very important to pray specifically. Let me give you some examples. When Karen and I were praying for a 15-passenger van, we prayed very specifically. We prayed for a van that had a back bench that was tan colored, even though the van did not have to be tan. Our friends, Ken and Gail Barnes, had a tan van and needed another bench for their van. They had lots of children also, and needed more seating capacity in their van. We were going to take out the back bench and use it for luggage, storage, etc. Therefore, we prayed for the van that we were going to buy to have a tan bench that we could give to the Barnes.

When we found a used Ford XLT-3500 15-passenger van, it was maroon in color. It was also missing the back bench. When we asked the dealer where the back bench was, he said it was missing, but he would give us a replacement. He did not find a matching maroon bench. All he had was a tan bench, and so he asked us if that would be acceptable. Of course we told him that it would be fine. We bought the van and gave the bench to the Barnes. They were surprised and blessed by the gift. None of this would have happened if we had not been praying specifically.

How can we pray specifically for one another? We can develop relationally with one another. As we get to know one another better, we also know how to pray more specifically for each other. Karen and I pray for each one of you in the church. We pray specifically for the things that you have asked us to pray about, and we pray for the things that we have perceived are needs in your lives. Both of these come through building relationally with one another.

The prayer cards that we have available are very good also. People write down their specific prayer requests and we pray for those specific requests. If you fill one out, we will pray over it.

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

When someone comes forward for prayer at a service, ask the person what they would like you to pray about. Let them tell you what they want prayer about. It is far better to pray specifically.

Another thing to do when someone comes forward is to ask the Holy Spirit what to pray about. The Holy Spirit may give you specific things to pray for them about.

A few weeks ago I went over to Bob and Carole's house to pray for them. On the way over there, the Holy Spirit told me several things to specifically say to them and to pray over them.

2. Paul tells them when to pray.

Pray at all times.

In verse 18 Paul addresses the question of when to pray. He tells them to pray at all times.

(Ephesians 6:18) "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,"

There are several different words in Greek used for time, with *chronos* and *kairos* being the two most common ones. *Chronos* means a space in time. It marks a quantity or a duration of a period. The word here is *kairos*, which means a fixed or definite period or season. While *chronos* denotes a quantity, *kairos* denotes quality. *Kairos* stresses a period of time marked by certain features. The use of *kairos* in this verse means that we are to pray in every season that we are in. We are to pray in the good seasons. We are to pray in the difficult chapters of our lives. We are to pray in the seasons of intense battle. We are to pray in the restful times. Solomon writes that there is a time for every activity under the sun. Paul writes that we are to pray in every one of those seasons and activities.

G2540. *kairos*, kahee-ros'; of uncert. affin.; an occasion, i.e. set or proper time:--X always, opportunity, (convenient, due) season, (due, short, while) time, a while. Comp. G5550.

G5550. *chronos*, khron'-os; of uncert. der.; a space of time (in gen., and thus prop. distinguished from G2540, which designates a fixed or special occasion; and from G165, which denotes a particular period) or interval; by extens. an individ. opportunity; by impl. delay:--+ years old, season, space, (X often-) time (-s), (a) while.

As I was praying and meditating on this passage this week, the Lord spoke to me about our fellowship with Him. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul concludes the letter by saying, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." There is a fellowship and communion that we can have with God. Paul wanted the Corinthians to experience that fellowship.

(2 Corinthians 13:14) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

What the Lord spoke to me about this week is that we are to pray at all times. We are to be in fellowship with the Lord and the Holy Spirit at all times. We are to carry on conversations with

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

Him throughout the day. We are to ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom about this. We are to ask the Lord for direction about this other matter. We are to tell the Lord how we feel about this other thing. We are to be fellowshiping and communing with the Holy Spirit in a much more intimate way throughout the day. He is always with us, but we do not always act like He is with us. We are to fellowship with Him at all times.

3. Paul tells them who to pray for.

Paul tells them to pray for all the saints.

In verse 18, Paul exhorts the church to be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. We are to be watchful and alert for our brothers and sisters. If we see something, we are to pray and petition the Lord on their behalf. Paul does not give us specifics for them. Since he is in prison and is cut off from the world, he probably does not know how to pray specifically for their needs. But, in the church at Ephesus, the saints are in relationship with one another. They are to be alert, and to pray and petition God on behalf of one another.

(Ephesians 6:18) "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,"

I appreciate the fact that you pray for Karen and I. I appreciate the fact that you are a praying body. I have never felt so loved and appreciated by any church in my life. I also appreciate Karen. She prays for me every morning during our prayer times. She knows what I am facing each day and week. I am so blessed by her concerns and her prayers for me.

Let me encourage all of you who are married to pray for one another. Your wife or your husband is a saint. Therefore, be on the alert and pray and petition God on their behalf. For those of you who are not married, pray and petition God on behalf of those in your oikos or sphere of influence. Pray for others in the church. Pray for your neighbors. Pray for one another.

Paul asks them to pray for him.

In addition to praying for all the saints, Paul asks them specifically to pray for him. Paul is humbly asking for their prayer support. Many of us consider Paul to be the greatest apostle. He planted numerous churches. He ran a good race and finished the course. Yet, he does not act like the greatest. He humbly asks the church to pray for him. He acknowledges his need for God to strengthen him and to give him boldness.

If you have needs in your life, don't wait for others to ask you about them. Take initiative. Ask someone to pray for you about this or that. You may find that they will ask you to pray for them. We need to learn from Paul's example to humble ourselves and ask others to pray for us.

2. Paul blesses the saints at Ephesus.

Paul closes the book with three specific blessings for the church at Ephesus. First, he blesses them with peace. Second, he blesses them with love. Third, he blesses them with grace.

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

(Ephesians 6:23-24) "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. {24} Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible."

Peace to the brethren.

Paul's first blessing is of peace. The Greek word for peace is *eirene*, which means peace, quietness, rest, tranquility, or prosperity. All of us need God's peace in our lives. It does not matter what season we are in, we need His peace. We need peace in our homes. We need peace in our marriages. We need peace in our workplaces. We need peace with our neighbors. We need peace in the midst of the trials and tribulations. We need peace in the midst of the battles we are fighting. We need God's peace about decisions that we are making.

The Jewish greeting of *shalom* was a greeting of peace. Paul opened the letter by greeting the saints in Ephesus with grace and peace. Now, Paul closes the letter with a blessing of peace and grace.

(Ephesians 1:2) "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Paul's second blessing is love with faith. In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul writes, "but now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Here, Paul blesses the Ephesians with love with faith, two out of the greatest.

(1 Corinthians 13:13) "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

I cannot think of a better thing for a church to be blessed with than love. Dave Angier's vision for their church is that they would experience the love of the Father, so that they can pass that love on to one another and to the world. John writes that by this all men will know that we are His disciples if we have love for one another.

(John 13:34-35) "'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.'"

The East Mountains will know that we are His ambassadors in our individual communities by the love that we show for one another. The people in our workplace will know that we are His ambassadors when they see us walking in love. Our children will know that God is real and that He is a God of love, when they see Mom and Dad loving one another. The world is desperately looking for a sign from God. I am asking God for miracles and signs and wonders. But, the most important thing that the world can see from any of us is love.

Paul writes that they will have love with faith. Faith is that which moves mountains. Faith is that which produces miracles. The signs and wonders come from faith. If we have love with faith, we have the best of both worlds.

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

Paul blesses them with grace.

Paul's final blessing to them is grace. He begins the book by blessing them with grace and peace and now he ends the book by blessing them with grace. The last verse of the Bible is a blessing of grace. John writes, "the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."

(Ephesians 6:24) "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible."

(Revelation 22:21) "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."

There are two definitions of grace that are excellent. We know that we are saved by grace, and not by works. It is the unmerited favor in our lives. Some people spell GRACE as God's Riches At Christ's Expense. I like that. I like His unmerited favor, because without it, I would be dead in my transgressions. Though my sins were as scarlet, He has made them white as snow. I am forever grateful for His grace.

And, having begun by grace, we are to continue in grace. We are to continue walking in that favor of God. I pray God's favor on myself. I pray God's favor on you. I pray God's favor on our church. I want God's favor for all of us. I want His grace.

But, there is another definition that I like. Bill Gothard defined grace as God's provision in our lives to accomplish God's will in our lives. When Paul entreats the Lord three times about removing the thorn from his flesh, the Lord tells him that His grace is sufficient for him. God had given Paul the provision that he needed to accomplish the will of God in his life.

(2 Corinthians 12:9) "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

In Romans 12, Paul shares that we all have differing gifts. We are all different parts of the body with different gifts. In verses three and six, he mentions the word grace with a different meaning. In verse three, he says, "for through the grace given to me...." Paul was called an apostle. He had grace for this job. He could say and do things because of the grace given to him. It was not just an unmerited favor; it was God's provision in His life to accomplish God's will for him and the church.

(Romans 12:3) "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

In verse six, Paul writes that "we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us each exercise them accordingly." There is a grace or provision given to each of us to accomplish the things that God has for each of us to do. Each of us has different gifts and a different grace to exercise those gifts.

Paul's Two Concluding Thoughts (Ephesians 6:18-24)

(Romans 12:6) "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"

I want this grace in my life, to accomplish working full time and pastoring this church. This grace will probably be for a season. God knows what I can and cannot do. But, I need His grace in my life.

I want this grace for each of you. I want God's provision for Karen. I want God's provision for Kathleen in this season. I don't just want His favor in her life, I want the grace she needs to walk through to the other side of this ordeal. I want God's grace for each and every one of you. I want all of us to exercise our gifts, to supply that which every joint needs to supply, so that our church will be built up and grow. It is His grace in our lives that will enable us to grow.

Let's pray. If you have some specific needs in your life, we want to pray for those specific needs. I am going to ask you to come forward for prayer. We want to pray for all the saints. We want to pray for specific needs this morning.

Introduction (Eph 6:10-24, Gal 3:27)

- We _____ some parts of the armor.
- We _____ some parts of the armor.

1. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to _____.

A. How to Pray

- Pray with prayer and _____. (Isaiah 66:2)
- Pray with _____.
- Pray with _____.
- Pray in the _____. (Eph 6:18, 1 Cor 14:2, 12-19, Jude 1:20, 1 Cor 14:2-5, 18-20, 1 Cor 12:3)
- Pray _____. (Eph 6:19-20, 21-22)

B. Paul tells them when to pray.

- Pray at _____. (Eph 6:18, 2 Cor 13:14)

C. Paul tells them who to pray for.

- Paul tells them to pray for all the _____. (Eph 6:18)
- Paul asks them to pray for _____.

2. Paul blesses the saints at Ephesus. (Eph 6:23-24)

- _____ to the brethren. (Eph 6:23, 1:2)
- _____ with faith. (Eph 6:23, 1 Cor 13:13, John 13:34-35)
- _____ to those who love the Lord. (Eph 6:24, Rev 22:21, 2 Cor 12:9, Rom 12:3, 12:6)

Two Definitions of grace

- Grace is God's unmerited _____.
- Grace is God's _____ to accomplish His will in our lives.

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