Intro

* + \*transition from All I Have Is Christ…
    - If you can believe it, we’re coming to a close on our walk through the Book of Ephesians together **[Building on Our Heritage slide]**
      * Several of the pastors have commented that this Book is so rich, we could turn around and preach our way through it once again in 2025
        + It’s safe to say, we’ve passed over more than we were able to cover—I’d encourage you to revisit some of the passages that were more profound for you

You can find the messages on our website, or you can download the App “Sermon Audio” – that’s how I listen to some of the other guys on staff, along with having access to thousands of other preachers across the world

* + - * More importantly, I’d encourage you to memorize passages from Ephesians that were particularly helpful or convicting for you
        + I’ve been thankful for all the men and women who have let me know about the verses and sections they’ve already committed to memory

God uses His Word, amen?

\*have your sword on you

* + - * Our passage concludes with this concept of spiritual warfare (\*please turn to Eph 6:18 (1174))
        + By the way, does the concept of spiritual warfare make you uncomfortable?

I remember a seminary course I took with Pastor Aaron a number of years ago—it wasn’t a course affiliated with our own school, Faith Bible Seminary

But I recall the professor saying, “I wish people would stop talking about the Christian life in such a militaristic way…”

* + - * Friends, what’s the problem with this comment?
        + GOD talks about our life in this way!!

We are in a *war*, not against each other, but against forces unseen

* + - **2 Corinthians 10:3-4 – For 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.**
      * Or, as we were reminded a bit earlier in our chapter…
    - **Ephesians 6:12 – 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.**
      * And these forces are relentless…
* That’s why God gave us *armor* and not *pillows*…
  + And the armor He’s given us is more than sufficient for the task at hand
    - The question then becomes: do we have the heart and mind to utilize the tools He’s equipped us with the fight the good fight?
  + In every foreign conflict that America has been involved in, there has been an effort to resource and equip native allies
    - In WWII, there were examples like the brave New Guineans | The Korean War had the ROK army | the GI’s trained the ARVN forces during the Vietnam war | and for a more modern example, the SDF fought alongside America and its allies in the Iraq War
      * God has blessed America with incredible resources: since WW2, we have been one of the most (if not THE most) technologically advanced fighting forces in the world
        + Thus, when we would train these local forces, we’d likely be introducing them to technology they’d be altogether unfamiliar with
    - One of my military friends worked with training native forces in Afghanistan, and he shared a sentiment that’s been consistent throughout all conflicts: *training* is more important than *equipment*…
      * You can have all the best stuff for fighting, but if you don’t know *how* to use it or *why* it’s more effective than dated weaponry, then it begins to feel more like an encumbrance than an asset
        + History recounts conflict after conflict where this was the case: a force would be stocked with resources far beyond their own technological capabilities, only to quickly abandon it when the heat of battle turned up
      * Can that be true for *spiritual warfare* as well??
        + It’s not enough for us to simply *put on* the armor of God, as the previous passages called us to do

We must wield these tools in an effective manner

And that’s what our passage covers today…

* + - * In order to remain spiritually effective with the weapons we’ve been given, we’re called to **Watch & Pray**
  + Please follow along as I read our passage for today…

Text

* + *Ephesians 6:18-24 –* ***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****I have sent him to you for this 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 incorruptible love.*
    - Again, we’re talking about how to utilize the weapons the Lord has given us
      * So from our passage, we see **4 humble requests to God for spiritual warfare**
  + You may have noticed a repeated charge in the beginning of the passage: we’re called to PRAY!
    - God wants us to be talking to Him throughout the spiritual battle
      * If we’re not talking to Him, who do you suppose we’re relying upon??
        + Therefore, God calls us to…

**I. Pray for Alertness**

* + There’s a lot in this opening passage
    - And to be honest, most of the time, this verse can feel like an overwhelming reprimand to the most prayerful of Christians
      * Just look at the use of the word “ALL” in the first verse…
* **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**
  + We are to be bringing ALL prayer and ALL petition to God
    - And how often? At ALL times!
      * This leads to our need to be alert with ALL perseverance and ALL petition, praying for ALL the saints!
    - Raise your hand if you’re nailing it here…
      * Who is able to do this?
        + You know the answer already: Jesus is able

And he doesn’t lower the expectations for us: He just provides grace and forgiveness when we inevitably fail

* + - * I’m sure the title of our message today brought to mind the incident in the Garden of Gethsemane to some
        + \*context of passage…
  + **Matthew 26:36-41 – Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.” And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**
    - There it is: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak
      * Jesus would have known this from experience—He was just as much *human* as you and I are right now
        + He knows the fatigue of spiritual battle: He fought and won during His 40 days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness

He knows the feeling of spiritual thirst: He endured unimaginable longing while bearing the wrath of the Father on the cross

He knows the vast depths of spiritual loneliness: He was abandoned by all leading up to His death

* + - * And did the enemy ever relent in their effort to cause Jesus to fail? To catch Him outside of a time when he was practicing all of the “ALL’s” we see in our passage?
        + Luke 4 says that, “When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time…”
    - Fellow Christian soldiers, we must understand that…
* **A. There is no truce in spiritual warfare** 
  + Do you believe Satan is at work *right now*?
    - 1 Peter 5:8 warns us to…
  + **1 Peter 5:8 – Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** 
    - If you fell into the lion exhibit at the Cincinnati Zoo, are you going to try and call a truce with Mufasa, or run as fast as you can?
      * But who do we have on our side?
        + While the religious leaders were seeking to entrap Jesus by seeing if he’d heal on the Sabbath, he replies by saying…
    - **John 5:17b – “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”**
      * That’s why we can talk to Him at any given point—thus, we’re called to…
  + **i. pray at all times**
    - This can be a confusing concept to some
      * Similarly, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 commands us to, “pray without ceasing”
        + Does God want us to be in a continual state of literal prayer to Him at all times?

This passage has certainly been understood to mean that to some—for instance, Clay Smith talks about instances where this sentiment has been taken to its most literal extreme…

* + - * **“Stories are told of monasteries full of constant prayer. Out of each monk's monetary allowance, a certain portion was set aside for payment to a brother to pray while the monk could not physically utter prayer. For example, while sleeping an individual could not possibly utter voiced prayer. So the brothers helped one another to ‘pray without ceasing’ by praying on behalf of one another as part of their ministry.” – Clay Smith, *‘Pray without Ceasing’: Is Paul Serious?*, 114.**
        + …but did Jesus and the apostles practice this?

Certainly not: Jesus taught, and slept, and even worked as a carpenter

So it must mean something else

* + - * Commentator John Calvin helps us out with this…
    - **“But what is the meaning of [pray] 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.” – John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 340–341.**
      * Thus, most theologians take this charge to mean we are to be prayerful in every season OR practicing a prayerful disposition at all times
        + In 2018, I went on the PBF Spring Break trip down to Tennessee

The president at the time, Michael Feller, gave a lesson on prayer that I’ll never forget

Speaking of this prayerful disposition, he likened it to a phone conversation

* + - * + Most phone calls have a beginning and an end

He used the imagery of “staying on the line” with God at all times—throughout our lives, we simply *don’t* hang up:

When we’re working, we’re still on the call

When we’re talking with others, we’re still on the call

When we’re *sleeping*, we’re still on the call

Certainly, there are times where we dedicate concerted time to talk to Him, just as Jesus did throughout *His* ministry

But brothers and sisters: do you have any open line of communication with God at all times? In other words, do you have a prayerful disposition—even outside of the times when you’re praying directly to Him?

* + - * This is essential for spiritual warfare
        + And we’re called to specifically…
  + **ii. pray in the Spirit**
    - Admittedly, I’m relying a lot on commentators for the early portion of this passage—but I think it’s important to get this right, lest we misuse the armor of God!
      * So what does it mean to pray in the Spirit?
        + Commentator Peter O’Brien helps us out with this one…
    - **“Believers are to pray continually because their struggle with the powers of darkness is never ending. And their prayers are to be ‘in or by the Spirit’, that is, inspired and guided by the same Holy Spirit through whom they have confident access to the Father (**[**2:18**](https://biblia.com/reference/Eph2.18)**). As those who have been built into God’s dwelling place in the Spirit (**[**2:22**](https://biblia.com/reference/Eph2.22)**) and who are being filled by the Spirit (**[**5:18**](https://biblia.com/reference/Eph5.18)**), they are to pray to the Father, prompted and guided by the Spirit. This is not a reference to praying in tongues… but has to do with specific requests offered through the Spirit by every believer involved in the spiritual warfare. Even when we do not know *what* to pray as we ought, the Spirit comes to our assistance and intercedes for us with unspoken groanings that are perfectly in line with the will of God (**[**lit.**](https://biblia.com/books/hcsb/Lk3.3)**‘according to God’,**[**Rom. 8:26–27**](https://biblia.com/reference/Ro8.26-27)**).” – O’Brien, *PNTC: Ephesians*, 485-86.**
      * We have *God* living inside of us, fellow Christian
        + Do you think that will impact our prayer life?

As O’Brien mentions, praying in the Spirit will look like humbly submitting to God’s will for us, understanding that…

* **B. It takes humility to pray**
  + Remember what we said earlier: if I’m not talking to God while I’m trying to fight the battles involved in spiritual warfare, who am I relying on for victory?
    - Obviously, I’d be relying on myself
      * You know who else struggled with this?
        + Our old friend, Simon Peter…
  + During the last supper, Jesus catches the disciples arguing about who was the greatest
    - Singling out Peter, He looks at him and says…
      * **Luke 22:31-34 – “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” But he said to Him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!” And He said, “I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.”**
        + In Peter’s arrogance, what was the weapon Jesus (the GOD OF THE UNIVERSE) deployed to aid Peter?

PRAYER…

* + - Peter was relying on himself, and that led to some pretty awful spiritual defeat
      * Similarly, our passage calls us to…
  + **i. pray with all perseverance**
    - This presumes a context of *trial*—no one is ever called to persevere through a back massage or a nap…
      * But we’re called to persevere in the midst of trial, and trials expose our weaknesses
        + I can try handle hardship on my own, abandoning the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God in order to pick up the pool noodle of Stefan’s “wisdom,” but that’s proven to be quite ineffective against the enemy’s fiery darts…
    - I need to humble myself, draw near to God, and pray for Him to give me strength to endure hardship
      * Similarly, we’re called to…
  + **ii. pray with all petition**
    - Perseverance presumes a *trial*, and petition presumes a *need*…
      * Do you see yourself as spiritually needy?
        + That’s how Jesus *begins* His sermon on the mount:

**Matthew 5:2 – [Jesus] opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven…”**

* + - If you believe yourself to be sufficient, then you will be a *prayerless Christian*
      * And if I can push it even further: if you find yourself to be lacking in prayer *now*, then you drastically overestimate your own spiritual armor and incorporeal strength…
        + Jesus isn’t calling us to lower ourselves, spiritually-speaking, as if we have a natural strength to shed

He’s calling us to *recognize our spiritual ineptitude*

In other words, embrace reality…

* + - \*gospel plug (\*perhaps you haven’t recognized your spiritual poverty)
  + So we’re called to pray for alertness—and this is a labor that never ceases
    - We’re then called to…

**II. Pray for Boldness**

* + The next two verses in our passage shift in audience
    - First, Paul (the author of the letter) encourages the Ephesian believers to be alert in their spiritual battle, utilizing their armor in full dependance on the Lord
      * But then, he shifts the attention from the readers to the author
        + He asks for the men and women of the church to pray for *him*—specifically that he would be bold in his declaration of the gospel message we just rehearsed…
* **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, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**
  + We just concluded a point that it takes humility to pray
    - We need to recognize our ineptitude to fight the spiritual battle in our own strength, and we need to see our need for God to help us in the fight
      * But we see that…
* **A. It takes humility to ask for prayer**
  + Once again, I’ll allow our commentators to state the point with greater eloquence…
    - **“Compared to most believers Paul was gifted, courageous, morally upright, and spiritually strong beyond measure. Yet he greatly needed God’s help and the help of fellow Christians. He knew that the power and blessings he had were not of his own doing, and his spiritual maturity and effectiveness were grounded in that awareness. God cannot use the self-sufficient person, because such a person feels no need for God. It is the humble believer who knows his own need and is genuinely poor in spirit whom the Lord can use and bless.   
      Paul also needed the prayers of fellow believers because he was a leader. Our enemy knows that when he strikes the shepherd, the sheep will scatter (**[**Matt. 26:31**](https://biblia.com/reference/Mt26.31)**), and church leaders—even as the Lord Himself—are Satan’s special targets. The more faithful and fruitful a pastor is, the more his people need to pray for his strength and protection. He is more subject to the devil’s schemes to make him discouraged or self-satisfied, hopeless or superficially optimistic, cowardly or overconfident. Satan uses every situation—favorable or unfavorable, successful or unsuccessful—to try to weaken, distract, and discredit God’s gifted men in their work of “equipping of the saints for the work of service” (**[**Eph. 4:12**](https://biblia.com/reference/Eph4.12)**). – MacArthur, *MNTC: Ephesians*, 385.**
      * Faith Church—let’s not beat around the bush
        + Your pastors need your prayers, and we especially need them in this season
    - We have a mighty Savior, we have an indwelling Spirit, and we have the full armor of God at our disposal
      * But we need to wield it well, and *we’re dependent on your prayers to do so faithfully*

Please: pray for your pastors and deacons

* + - * + Pray for humility—that none of us would be puffed up with pride

Pray for wisdom—that each of us would speak and act in such a way that is glorifying to Jesus and edifying to the church family

And pray for *boldness*—that when the righteous next step is laid before us, we would fix our eyes on Christ and walk—no matter the cost

* + - * Because boldness isn’t the willingness of someone to run his mouth…
* **B. Boldness implies action**
  + - That’s what Paul was praying for
      * Most specifically, he was asking for boldness to…
  + **i. proclaim the gospel**
    - Why would this take boldness?
      * Right after Jesus shares the gospel with Nicodemus—one of the Pharisees—He talks about this anticipated rejection
        + Everyone knows John 3:16 (\*begin to recite)

…but Jesus goes on to say this in v 19…

* + - **John 3:19-20 – This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**
      * The gospel is a light brighter than the sun, shining onto a world that’s up to all sorts of darkness
        + And deeds done in darkness hate… what? (LIGHT!)

Those caught up in darkness have two possible responses to the light:

1) Change or

2) Rage

* + - * + By God’s grace and through His divine mercy, most of you in this room have chosen the former

But you’re in a great minority

The world raged so violently against the Light, they killed Jesus through long, slow torture

* + - * You might not ever experience the same amount of vitriol, but each of us who declare the gospel is sure to face some level of persecution
        + God’s Word promises this elsewhere…
    - 2 Timothy 3:12 – Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
      * So we must boldly proclaim the gospel, but also…
  + **ii. live for Christ**
    - Remember: there’s no truce in spiritual warfare
      * To emphasize this point, we looked at 1 Peter 5:8, talking about Satan prowling like a roaring lion
        + But the following verse gives the solution to this murderous enemy…
    - **1 Peter 5:9a – But resist him, firm in your faith…**
      * How do you thwart the strikes of the devil? RESIST! (\*repeat)
        + James talks about this as well…
    - **James 4:7 – Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**
      * RESIST! (\*repeat)
        + Perhaps that’s you right now, brandishing your full armor, standing firm in your submission to God, living the life He’s called you to live in Christ Jesus

But perhaps you’re one of our wounded comrades, battered by the enemy after yet another barrage of his attacks

Physical wounds are easy to see—spiritual ones can be concealed with greater ease

* + - * If you find yourself defeated once more by the enemy, bleeding out on the battlefield of spiritual warfare, what do wounded soldiers cry out? (MEDIC)
        + Cry out to our Great Physician, who is able to heal those imperceptible spiritual wounds—whether caused by sin or suffering
    - And then trust that…
* **C. God controls the outcome**
  + Where was Paul at the time of his writing? (prison)
    - Why was he there? (the gospel)
      * And what was he praying for? (that he would have boldness to proclaim the gospel)
        + Sometimes, God allows the Light of the gospel to bring men and women towards repentance—this brings about a celebration that even the angels can’t help but join in

But when exposure to the Light brings about rage, then you’ll face consequences similar to Paul’s life and ministry

Who determines the difference? God alone

* + - * Our part is to simply and *boldly* carry the Light to a world covered in darkness
        + And…

**III. Pray for Co-laborers**

* + So to catch us up: we need to put on the full armor of God, standing alert and praying for boldness to resist the devil and proclaim the Light
    - But we’re not called to do this alone—God has given us one another…
* **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. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.**
  + Each of us have been in a position where we needed a helping hand
    - In those moments, we can recall times when someone came to our aid or times when we felt all alone
      * Very often, what was the difference (from a human perspective)?
        + Usually, it came in the form of a person or group willing to give of their time or resources in order to assist
  + In spiritual warfare, we certainly need to continually call out to God for His help, and we need to petition one another for prayer and assistance, but we *ourselves* need to…
* **A. Have a willing heart**
  + Gospel ministry doesn’t simply ask the question: “who will help me in my time of need?”
    - It asks the question: “who can I help in their time of need?”
      * Tychicus had a thankless and risky job: bring news of Paul to the churches spread abroad
        + But he was *willing*…

And without his willingness, we wouldn’t have this letter to the church in Ephesus

Additionally, commentator Peter O’Brien states that Tychicus carried the letter to the church in Ephesus and accompanied Paul in the later portion of his ministry

* + - * + We don’t determine the *impact* of our ministry—we can only display a willingness to serve Christ and His people in whatever He may call us to do

In this spiritual battle, are there jobs too menial for you to carry out?

God never commissions you without purpose—faithfully and willingly serve however He may call you to do so, and…

* **B. Encourage and strengthen co-laborers** 
  + This can be a hard one
    - Imagine if Tychicus had a bit of a preference towards Colossae and was tired of seeing Ephesus get all the attention
      * Or maybe he had spent a bunch of time pouring into the Colossian believers and was jealous of Paul’s love for the Ephesian church
        + Or worse yet, what if he preferred Colossae’s philosophy of ministry over Ephesus’s inferior way of caring for men and women?

We may not be reading this letter today…

* + - But look at our context: I tell our college students quite often that God has blessed the greater Lafayette area with *several* Bible-believing, Jesus loving churches and ministries
      * We need to be supporting them in their gospel labor—recognizing that our enemy is prowling lion, not the shepherd or flock down the road
        + Paul puts it this way to the Philippian church:
    - **Philippians 1:15-18 – Some [brothers] indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.**
      * Do we rejoice in *and pray for* the fellow gospel heralds in our area?
        + I know *I* don’t do it enough
  + Let’s commit to praying for their well-being, and…

**IV. Pray for Blessing**

* + …for ourselves and for one another
    - The last portion of the book is a benediction, or a blessing
      * Paul asks for four items: peace, love, faith, and grace…
* **Ephesians 6:23-24 – Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.**
  + Each of these requests have a note of irony when placed in the context of spiritual warfare
    - To begin, he’s praying for…
* **A. Peace amidst wartime**
  + From a human perspective, this is impossible
    - Definitionally, a time of war is when you’re engaged with the enemy and enduring an *absence* of peace
      * Who is able to provide peace in the midst of ongoing war? God alone…
        + In the context of prayer, Paul tells the Philippians…
    - **Philippians 4:6b-7 – …in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**
      * Yes, brothers and sisters, in the midst of an all-out-war, God is able to provide His people with *peace*…
        + How do we attain it?

Talk to Him!!

* + - Additionally, he prays for…
* **B. Love amidst apathy**
  + This context comes from a different passage on the church in Ephesus
    - \*context of Rev 2
      * The first church Jesus talks about is the Ephesian church, and He has *this* to say about them…
  + **Revelation 2:2-5 – I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.**
    - Jesus is calling a fruitful, yet loveless congregation back to the main thing: the greatest of commandments (\*you shall love…)
      * A soldier can be going through all the motions, fighting the spiritual battle against the forces of darkness
        + But if he or she has lost the *main thing*, defeat is close behind

And how do we attain this love?

Talk to Him!

* + - Love Jesus more than anything else, and that will give you the strength to stand firm
      * And pray for…
* **C. Faith amidst suffering**
  + Warfare is rife with gut-wrenching loss—spiritual warfare is no different
    - In the face of great suffering, we can easily become disheartened and even loose faith
      * But that’s only if we cannot see past the present battle
        + Because if you keep reading in the Book of Revelation, who wins the full war? (God and His people!)

Faith looks beyond temporal loss and grounds itself in the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ

It’s no accident that Paul grounds his prayer in the person of Christ—he’s making a nod to the very One who overcame the grave!

* + - * No matter what level of loss or suffering we may be enduring in this fight, we worship a God who *has* won and who *will* win in the end
        + But if you feel your faith wavering, what should you do?

Talk to Him!

* + The faith He supplies allows us to pray for…
* **D. Grace amidst injustice**
  + Paul was praying for grace… from a prison cell
    - God’s grace enables us to persevere, regardless of any circumstances we may face in our spiritual battle
      * Additionally, God’s grace enables hopelessly wounded fellow soldiers to find healing in Him, and keep fighting the good fight
        + If you find yourself in this position, you should… Talk to Him!!

Conclusion

* + That last portion of our passage is so vital: “Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love…”
    - Remember the title of our message this morning: Watch & Pray
      * All of this is empty if it’s done without love
        + We *talk* to those whom we love—we *fight* for those whom we love—we *live* for those whom we love…

Love will be the impetus behind all steps towards Christ, and lovelessness will characterize each step away from Him

* + - Love Jesus
      * Stay alert
        + Live boldly

Sacrificially serve

Be blessed

* + - * And TALK TO GOD!
  + Let’s do that together right now…

\*\*PRAY\*\*