

## We're All About Prayer – Eph 6:18

This is the second message in our series – **What's Up With Harvest?** Who we are, what we do, and why

The first answer, last week, was that we're all about the Word

We're all about proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology

The second answer has to do with prayer – **We're All About Prayer**

To flesh that out, we're going to look at one verse, found in Eph 6:18 (v16-18)

We're all about prayer . . .

### All the time

And we should be – it's a big deal

It's mentioned 4x's in this verse alone – *praying, prayer, and supplication* . . .

And 296x's in the Bible as a whole

Among those are Scriptures like . . .

*Pray without ceasing* (1 Thess 5:17); *Be constant in prayer* (Rom 12:12)

*Continue steadfastly in prayer* (Col 4:2); *Pray at all times* (Eph 6:18)

We're all about prayer, all the time – because it's a big deal, and the Bible says so

- But what I want to focus in on from this verse, is that we're all about prayer, all the time, because prayer is powerful  
It's explicit in James 5:16 – *The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working*  
And it's implied here in Eph 6:18

The context is Paul's instruction to put on the armor of God – to arm ourselves with the truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word of God

Those are the weapons of war in our fight against evil

And prayer is the power behind the weaponry – that's the implication here in v18 . . .

That prayer is the power behind the armor

- Let me show you why I say that  
First of all, *praying* here, is a participle (a little HS grammar lesson here)  
A participle being something you do *while* you do something else  
Or something you do to *accomplish* something else – like the Great Commission

So in this case, he says in v11 – *Put on the whole armor of God*

And again in v13 – *Take up the whole armor of God*

And in v14 – *Stand therefore*; v16 – *Take up the shield of faith*

V17 – *Take the helmet of salvation*

Do all these things, all the while – *praying* (v18)

So prayer is something we are to do as we fight the *spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places* (12b)

The implication being, that P is the power behind the fight; Power behind the armor

- It's like those **suits of armor** worn by knights in the 16<sup>th</sup> century  
These bad boys did you no good unless you put them on  
Even then, they did you no good unless you had a horse strong enough to carry you into battle, and sustain you in the fight while you wore them  
Because you certainly couldn't move around on your own power very well

Same is true of the armor of God

It's only as good as the prayer that supports it; It's only as good as the power behind it  
That's the implication here

- And power we need, because the battle rages  
If the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers over this present darkness are constantly at their posts – stealing, killing, and destroying . . .  
How much more should we be constantly at ours, praying? Way more!  
As long as the battle rages, so should our prayers – all the time

We're all about prayer . . .

### In the Spirit

*Put on the whole armor of God . . . praying at all times in the Spirit*

First of all, let me dispel the notion that this is a reference to speaking in tongues as some would suggest – it's not

“In the Spirit” or “In the HS” is a phrase used 21x's in the NT to mean “under the influence of the Spirit” . . .

And only once is it used in conjunction with speaking in tongues

And even then, it still has the same general meaning of, “under the influence of”

So there's no biblical basis, either here or anywhere else, indicating that *praying in the Spirit* means praying in tongues

What Paul is advocating here, is to be Spirit-led and Spirit-enabled in your prayers

Sensitive to *his* leading on what to pray for

Receptive to how *he* wants you to pray

Responsive to *his* prompting/nudgings

All of which means – if your heart doesn't have words, be quiet; Pray silently; Listen

Better that your heart be without words – because the HS has withheld them . . .

Better that, than your words be without heart – because you've supplied them

- Have you ever been in times of prayer when you felt like there was too much self-talk and not enough God-talk?  
Too many fake prayers and not enough real ones?  
That shouldn't be; That's not praying in the Spirit  
That's not praying under his influence, led and enabled by his presence

One of the things I so love about our Wed morning prayer times as men, is that . . .

We pray outwardly *when* we're led by the HS to do so

We verbalize our prayers because we're *compelled* to break the silence, not because we're *afraid* of it

If we're not compelled, we don't pray out loud

That's praying in the Spirit; That's being sensitive to his leading and influence

- And that should characterize *all* of our prayers  
That's the sense of the phrase – *with all prayer and supplication* (re-read v18a)  
There should never be a time when you pray *apart* from the HS's leading and guiding  
Never be a time when you “go it alone”

You know you're on your own when . . .

You try to preach in your prayers; When you try to get a message across

Or you want to impress with your prayers

Or you worry about what other people think of your prayers

That's not prayer in the Spirit, that's prayer in the flesh

Because when you pray in the Spirit, the only one you're concerned w/ pleasing is God

And he doesn't care as much about your words as he does your heart

What's up with Harvest? Why is God doing such a work?

Because we're all about prayer in the Spirit, all the time . . .

### **No matter what**

*To that end, keep alert with all perseverance*

What end? What purpose? *Praying at all times in the Spirit*

For the purpose of being Spirit-led, at all times, in all your prayers . . .

Stay sharp – stay focused in your walk with Christ; And persevere in doing so

- When I traded commodities on the floor of the CBOT, I used to stand in a large pit with a bunch of other traders who were competing to buy and sell the same things I was buying and selling

It was no problem to stay sharp when things were happen'

When things were topsy-turvy in the world and the markets were out of whack

But when things were slow, it was a different story

I had to *work* to stay alert and stay sharp; Exercising all the perseverance I could muster

So that when a trade presented itself, I could act on it immediately, *no matter what*

No matter what trivial conversation I was involved in . . .

No matter how bored I was; No matter how I felt

No matter what else was going on, the best traders had the discipline to keep themselves alert, in order to take advantage of the opp's when they presented themselves

Same is true when it comes to prayer – opp's are fleeting and emergencies sudden

We must guard against the complacency that says – “God has it all under control; It won't hurt to take a little break from my prayers”

Yes he does, but that doesn't relieve us of our responsibility to pray

There's too much at stake and too many pitfalls, to lay down on the job

Instead, we must exercise all the perseverance we have, to stay sharp and keep alert *no*

*matter what* is going on in our lives – no matter how calm they are, or how turbulent

We must *keep alert with all perseverance*, always seeking God's face and intervention, and more so at a moment's notice if necessary

*Put on the whole armor of God . . . praying at all times . . .* (re-read v18)

We're all about prayer – all the time, in the Spirit, no matter what . . .

### **For all the saints**

Saints – those who are *saved*; those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior

Not just a select few who have done great things through the course of history . . .

But *all* believers – that's what the Bible teaches

And we are to make supplication for *all* of them

Both here and around the world; For tangible needs and intangible ones

For all the saints, we are to make humble, sincere requests to God for their needs

- Needs like this **Register** from a few years back

Where someone taped a real estate listing on it, and wrote at the bottom – “With God, all things are possible; Need this condo \$110,000; For the glory of God”

And so we prayed, *making supplication for all the saints*

And needs like the salvation of family members, and friends, and co-workers – who you put down on your Registers a lot

We pray on your behalf, that they would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ

That they would believe that Jesus (God in the flesh) came to earth, died for their sins, (paying the penalty they deserved), and rose again for their life

We pray for needs like that, all the time – making supplication for all the saints

Many of you are here today and walking with the Lord as a result

We prayed, and God convicted you of your sin, convinced you of the truth, and saved you unto eternal life

Some of you may even be on the verge of such a decision today

And you need to know – we've been praying for you

And we've been praying for the ministry of Brooks and Nina Buser, Global Partners in PNG (**map**) . . .

Who live among a people called the Y-Y on the other side of the world

We've been praying that God would bless the work of their hands

And that the Y-Y would receive the Good News of Jesus Christ that they're hearing for the very first time, and embrace him as their Lord and Savior

- In fact, earlier this year, we distributed about 500 photos of the people in that tribe, in order to pray for them by name on behalf of Brooks and Nina

Did you bring your pictures? Hold them up

If you've been following their progress, you well know that we've received some pretty encouraging updates in the past few months

But none so encouraging as the video we just received

I want to show it to you, to encourage you in your supplication for all the saints

It's about 6½ minutes long – starting from the day they built the teaching house and began literacy training, to the time they began sharing the message of God's Word

But it goes fast, so watch closely – **Video** (Yembi-Yembi - 6:40)

- That's why we're all about P – all the time, in the Spirit, no matter what, for all saints (Hold up picture) Because God answers

And we're trusting that God will answer our prayers for *you* as well, if you haven't yet embraced him as *your* Lord and Savior like some of the Y-Y

We've been praying that you would . . .

Believe – that when Jesus died, he died for you; for your sins, in your place

Realize that apart from faith in Jesus Christ, you're destined for eternal condemnation

Come to a place of true brokenness/repentance for your sin

Admitting before God that you're a sinner; And asking him to forgive you

Make a commitment to live for him for the rest of your days

We've been praying that you would cross over from death to life, via the bridge-man,  
Jesus Christ . . .  
Who loves you and gave *his* life, so you could have *yours*, forever  
If you want to do that – in true belief and true repentance . . .  
Pray with me right now

- Prayer of salvation  
God, for the first time in my life – I believe  
I believe that Jesus died for me, enduring your wrath for my sins, in my place  
God, I believe; Thank you  
I admit that I'm a sinner – that I've rebelled against you, hurt others, and tried to live  
my own life, and I'm sorry; Please forgive me  
I love you, and I'm ready to live for you as Lord of my life  
If you just prayed with me, you just made the most important decision of your life, and we  
rejoice w/ u – God bless you in that
- Do one more thing, and *pray* for the Y-Y – *making supplication for all the saints*  
So if u brought the picture of the person you've been praying for, hold it up  
And as I pray in general, you pray these things for your person

Lord, thank you for all that you've been doing among the Y-Y  
That their faith would be strengthened  
That they would comprehend and know the breadth and length and height and depth of  
your love for them in Christ  
That they would be rooted and grounded in love for one another  
That you would give them an increasing passion to spread your word  
I pray the same thing for those who just gave their lives to you, right here  
We look forward to the day when we all get to worship *together*, before your throne, for  
your glory – what a day of rejoicing that will be

- If you just prayed with me . . .
  1. Pick up a New Believer's Packet  
It will help you understand the decision you just made  
And begin to grow in your new found relationship with Christ
  2. Tell another brother/sister in Christ, what you just did  
Just say – "I just gave my life to Christ, and wanted you to know"  
Let them rejoice with you

Be assured, that the God who saves you, will keep you – faithful and strong  
Because his love endures forever; Let's worship