

Prayer (Ukraine 2/8-2/16)

Introduction: I am very excited and very *much* honored to be here with you tonight. It's my prayer that this time together will inspire us to grasp a greater freedom in prayer . . . and my sisters back home are praying the same! Taya asked me to speak to you on intercession, a topic close to my heart. I have spent many years in various prayer ministries and I think of prayer as the front line of battle. The battle *is* won on our knees. One of my favorite Proverbs is: "The horse can be prepared for battle but it is the **Lord** Who gives the victory!"

Pray!

Oswald Chambers, a great bible teacher, wrote:

"We think of prayer as a preparation for work or a claim after having done work, but prayer is **the essential** work!"

Jesus in Luke 18:1 spoke a parable to them that men **always ought to pray and not lose heart** (not to faint, not to give up). . . Here He used the parable of the **importunate or (persistent) widow**. Read **Luke 18:2-8**

Questions:

- If the insensitive and Godless judge would answer the widow's request / how much more will our God respond to the continual prayers of His children? But we must be persistent and not faint . . .
- What is persistent prayer? **Intercession!**

Jesus is our example.

- Isa 53:12 in a prophetic verse of Jesus Christ said:
. . . and He bore the sins of many & made intercession for the transgressors.
- On the cross, He interceded for His executioners:
Luke 23:34 "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do."
And He still does today . . . for us and **all** the world.

What is intercession? It is not a way to get things from God, as much as a way to get to know God.

- It's from the Hebrew word that means to impinge = to collide, to strike (on upon or against) or Latin to **push against!**
- By illustration it means, by importunity = to ask with repeated and insistent requests, to beg = hence our picture of the importunate widow.
- It also means, to come between = in a middle position / Jesus between God and Man and us between Jesus and our request
- Cause to entreat = to ask earnestly, beseech, implore, beg, petition, meet together, pray

Doesn't that definition make you think of the many times we are told to . . . ?

I beseech you brethren . . . I beg you

I love the meaning to **push against** . . . Think of intercession as 'pushing open the doors of heaven' and 'pushing back the strategies of the enemy!'

Meet together . . . in homes, in churches in small groups . . . The 120 in the upper room, ‘Where one or 2 are gathered, there **I AM in the midst of them.**’ God transcends our space and time because He’s everywhere & knows everything.”

EX. Elizabeth Aunt / NM, me /CT Sister /MA

EX. Sarah bite by Dog in CT / Bible study praying for us in RI

Prayer in the New Testament refers to intercession and supplication, so we have come full circle, when we pray . . . we are interceding.

However when we pray or intercede we must remember that prayer is not what it cost us but what it cost God . . . our atonement! It’s only by the death of Jesus we have the right to come to a holy God. When you feel unworthy remember Heb10:19 tells us we have “full freedom and confidence to enter into the Holy of Holies by the **power and virtue** in the **blood of Jesus**.”

So, with those definitions in mind I’m going to speak to you on the **5 S’s of intercession** (there are volumes of books on the subject, this is just one very *small* piece of a much bigger puzzle.

Our Text is from Ephesians 6:10-18 If you have your bibles, let’s turn there.

1. Our **first S** is **strong**, found in the first sentence, verse 10,

We are exhorted to “**be strong** in the Lord and in the power of His might.” The word strong may also be translated ‘be made strong’. The ‘to be made, suggests that we cannot do it by ourselves but *only* in the power of His Holy Spirit.

Pray needs to be Spirit lead, not in our flesh, not by our minds but by the inner voice of the Holy Spirit. Scripture . . . Romans 8:26b . . . “but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” If our prayers don’t line up with the word of God (that’s His will) we are wasting our time.

2. Our second S is stand. Stand is mentioned 3 times!

First time in verse 10, we are told “to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able **to stand** against the wiles of the devil.” (his trick, lies and strategies).

Second time in verse 13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, **to stand**. Having done all suggest there is nothing left to do but to continue to stand in the gap.

Third time it’s a command in verse 14, “**Stand** therefore . . . And Paul speaks on the various parts of armor that we are to dress ourselves with. Another lesson© for another time!

Stand here is the same word that Christ used in Rev. 3:20 ‘Behold, I **stand** at the door and knock.’”

From the same Greek word meaning **to abide** (it’s not for a special occasion but a continual practice).

We have to continue in intercession even when we do **not** see the answer. Many times God’s silence is His answer (for the moment) all the while working in us a greater revelation of His character.

* Standing in prayer **may** not change the circumstance but you can be sure God will change us in the circumstance.

Example: Crying out to God for salvation of my children, not changed, lost heart, God later revealed to me I was praying and begging but with a demanding attitude, with a sense of entitlement rather than humility and faith. Now, with that revelation and repentance, I'm still standing, still interceding but with a greater faith and gratitude for His Word and promises.

- God does not exist to answer our every prayer (do you give everything to your children?) But by our prayer we discern the mind of God. Our goal is to have the mind of God in a matter. John 17:11 "That they may be one as We are."
- The circumstances we go through can make us better or bitter. Which do you choose?

3. Our third S is the shield of Faith one of the 6 weapons of our armor.

* the shield in Roman days measured 4 feet by 2 1/2 feet and it interlocked with the next soldier to make an impenetrable, fireproof shield. Verse 16 reads "Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. **All** means (the whole, absolutely everything, thoroughly) that the **shield** is to be used against everything."

The Christians shield (our faith) is the only defensive piece of warfare that covers **all** the rest of the armor and offers it protection.

- .In Hebrews 11 the great chapter on faith in verse one we read, "Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses."
- .In Hebrew 11:6 it also reads, "But without faith it is **impossible** to please Him for he who comes to God must believe that **He is** and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Then it speaks of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, and says in verse 13, "These all died in faith, **not** having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, (and) embraced them . . ." **We** have to **embrace His God's** promises, (not our whims) **His** word in prayer with conviction, regardless of the circumstance. . . Are you ready to embrace God's promises, His word even if it takes 10, 20 years or *more* to see that loved one saved?

4. Our fourth S is the Sword of the Spirit, found in verse 17b.

The sword of the Spirit is the active, living word of God.

It is the only weapon out of the 6 weapons mentioned that is **offensive**, which means a weapon we can use to attack with. The other weapons mentioned protect, they are defensive. The word of God, our sword **attacks** the enemy, within and without!

- Our best example of this is in when Satan tempts Jesus in the desert Math 4:1-11, 3 times the devil tries to seduce Jesus away from God and to himself and three times Jesus resists with "It is written . . ." And that is the only way we can resist the devil, to be so saturated with His word Satan can't trick or seduce us away

from the truth. Example: demonstrate, fencing for 3 years.... Parry off opponents sword (lies of the enemy)!

- In Hebrews 4:12 it says: For the **word of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus discerned the woman at the well, He discerned the wrong motives of the Pharisees, and He discerns our hearts as well.
- That is why I pray using God's word and in the Holy Spirit.

5. Our 5th S is **Supplication** found in verse 18 of our text.

'Praying always with **all** prayer and **supplication** in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with **all** perseverance and **supplication** for all the saints . . .'

And that is why we are here! Without prayer, without supplication all the armor in the world would be useless.

Supplication is to be made for all the saints all the time: that means general prayers, or specific petitions, that means morning, noon or night

David wrote in Ps 55:1 Give ear to my prayer (Listen), OH God and do not hide Yourself from my **supplication**.

- Strong's definition of **supplication** in Hebrew is entreaty or **to ask earnestly** / or in Greek= a petition (**a solemn request** to a superior authority) or prayer.
- Rev.3:15-16 To the church at Laodicea . . . the Spirit spoke through John, 15. "I know your works and what your are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! 16. So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth! *Restaurant example* of food being below 40 degrees or above 140 degrees F. or food goes bad and makes you sick. We can't be lukewarm or half hearted, we will compromise in the middle ground and get sick or worse, make others sick.
- James 5:16 tell us, "The effective (effectual=**compassionate**), fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Amplified bible version reads, "The earnest (**heartfelt, continued**) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available (dynamic in its workings)!" Example: Prayer Partners: Barb and Mary praying for God to remove me from an intolerable work situation or the vice President would leave (one or the other) but God's will be done!

God broke that terrible Spirit of Oppression = explain