



SERIES: PRAYER, THE PEW AND THE PULPIT

PRAY & GO

Ephesians 6:18-20; Col. 4:2-4

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Ephesians 6:18-20 – “Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. 20 For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.” (CSB)

Colossians 4:2-4 – “Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, 4 so that I may make it known as I should.” (CSB)

Ice Breaker – Give one high and low from your life in the last week.

CONTEXT

Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians sometime in AD 60–61, around the same time he wrote Colossians and Philemon, as he sent all three letters by the hand of Tychicus, accompanied by Onesimus (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7–9; Philemon 1:10–12). It was during this time that Paul sat in Rome undergoing his first Roman imprisonment (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1), making Ephesians one of the four epistles commonly known as the Prison Epistles. The others are Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. In this book Paul is trying to show these Christ followers their position in Christ in reference to salvation in chapters 1-3. On the other hand Paul is telling them how to live out their faith as Christ followers in chapters 4-6.

Colossians was written by Paul to the church at Colossae during Paul’s imprisonment in either Ephesus or Rome. The Colossian church was founded by Epaphras and Philemon (Philemon hosted this church in his home, cf. Philemon 2) probably during Paul’s three-year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). A syncretistic heresy had emerged in the Colossian church, apparently mixing Jewish, pagan, and even Christian elements. Paul writes this epistle in order to combat this Colossian heresy by arguing for the supremacy of Jesus Christ and explaining the implications of Christ’s supremacy for the church’s belief and practice. Paul wants them to understand that Jesus Christ is our supreme Lord and sufficient Savior.

MAIN POINT – Making Jesus known requires prayer, wisdom, a sense of urgency, and a commitment to the gospel.

CONTENT

According to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20), making Jesus known throughout the world is not optional for believers. We can find our motivation to make Jesus known in what He has done for us and what He desires to do through our lives to reach a lost world. When it comes to being a gospel-sharing people, we must commit to praying for God to open doors for us to make the gospel known to our lost friends and family members and to every nation.

I. Effective Praying – (Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2)

Eph. 6:18 – In Ephesians 6:10-17 Paul has been talking to about the armor of God and putting it on daily. He talked to them about the spiritual battle that Christ followers have each and every day. Paul as a prisoner was more than likely tempted to be quiet about as his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Plus the armor is needed by the Christ follower for prayer and evangelism.

“pray at all times” – we are to be watchful and be ready to pray at the drop of a hat. Paul is expressing the comprehensiveness of prayer here. D.L. Moody, Billy Graham, Charles Stanley & many other men and women were used greatly by God. They started their day on their knees in prayer and ended the day on their knees in prayer. We need prayer in the spiritual battle that we face every day.

“in the Spirit” - Prayer must be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit enables us to pray more adequately (Ro 8:26; Jude 20). This phrase does not mean to pray in one’s heart but to pray under the influence of the Spirit. We need His assistance in our prayer (Ro 8:26). – Grant Richison – Commentary on Ephesians

When we walk according to the flesh or our will, we are not going to be praying. We will not be seeking God’s will and ways.

Effective praying will be led by the Holy Spirit to take every personal request and request for others to the throne of God. Then Paul states to “stay alert with all perseverance.” A good soldier keeps watch for the enemy. He never sleeps on his spiritual laurels. He is constantly on guard about praying in the Spirit. When we have spiritual alertness in our prayers, we will have perseverance in our prayers. We will keep bringing our prayer requests to the Lord until He answers them according to His will.

Col. 4:2 – “Devote” – means to give constant attention to; to persevere. Take all your prayers and concerns to the Lord and persistent in doing it. God wants us to be in the habit of praying to Him daily.

Josh Hunt – “People who enjoy God enjoy prayer. They enjoy prayer for its own sake. They don’t enjoy prayer so they can get something else from prayer; they enjoy prayer because there is, for them, nothing in life better than communing with God.” .

“stay alert in it with thanksgiving” – the prayers of a Christ follower are to be filled with thanksgiving and be spiritually alert when praying. Paul was telling the Colossians to pray with mental alertness. Three apostles fell asleep during a prayer meeting (Mt. 26:41-43) in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus told them to “watch and pray.” They did neither.

One commentator stated that prayer and thanksgiving can never disassociated from each other in the life of a Christ follower. Believing prayer will be persevering prayer.

We need to pray because we are in a spiritual battle each and every day. Our utmost concern in prayer should be for spiritual issues, not physical problems. We not only pray about our own spiritual problems but for the spiritual battles of others. Prayer is an act of dependence on God for whatever we might be facing.

II. Effective Intercession for Evangelism – (Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:3-4)

**In advancing the gospel, what role does prayer play? Explain.
What is the gospel? Can you share the gospel with our group in a minute or less?**

Eph. 6:19-20 – In verses 19 and 20 Paul asked his readers to pray for him personally. Paul was someone who believed in the effectiveness of prayer. He was confident that if the Christ followers prayed for him he would have freedom in preaching and sharing the gospel.

He asked them to pray that he would be able to open his mouth and make known the boldness of the gospel. He knew of the importance of people interceding for him in presenting the gospel. In addition Paul was currently sitting in jail waiting for his trial before the Roman government. He wanted to make clear what the gospel was before those at his trial.

In verse 20 he asks for boldness again as an ambassador for Christ. He wanted to speak the gospel with boldness and freedom. Paul knew prayer warriors were necessary for the work of God and the gospel to advance. Satan does not want us to have the right words to say or the boldness to speak in the face of conflict.

Col. 4:3-4 - Paul asked believers to pray for him, to petition God to give him an opportunity to preach the message—the good news of salvation in Christ. Paul wanted to continue to proclaim the mystery of the Messiah. God’s once-hidden purpose—to include Gentiles in His family of faith—was now an open intention. Although Paul may have had in mind opportunities to tell the good news in prison, most likely he meant his release from prison so that he could resume spreading the gospel. This was the commission or mandate Christ had given him; in this sense, Paul was required to speak.

Paul wanted to “make known” the gospel. He wanted his sharing to be so clear, simple and plain that nobody could say I don’t understand. He wanted the Praetorian Guard chained to him to see the gospel so clearly that there would be no mistake about the gospel message. He wanted the ability to communicate the gospel in simple terms.

God answered Paul’s request for prayer. After his imprisonment he continued for two years “boldly and without hindrance” preaching the gospel (Acts 28:30-31). The gospel spread through the praetorian guard (Phil. 1:2) and Caesar’s household (Phil. 4:22).

How are prayer and evangelism related? Can you have one without the other?

Why did Paul pray for an open door? Can God close doors?

What would change if we saw ourselves (first and foremost) as those sent by God on His mission?

CORRELATION - Mark 16:15; Acts 1:14, 2:42, 2:47, 4:20, 20:20-21; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 12:2; 1 Thess. 5:17

APPLICATION - Knowledge without application or action is useless information.

Answer these 4 questions – Now what? So what? What does this matter to my life? What does this text demand of me?

How would you describe your prayer life? Vibrant, dynamic, wide-awake, sleepy or non-existent?

How seriously do you take prayer?

Do you pray for lost people that you know and don't know personally?

- * Christians should treat prayer as something serious in their lives.
- * We need boldness to share the gospel.
- * We all need others praying for us and we need to pray for others.
- * The flesh, devil and the world wants to distract us from praying, interceding for the lost and others and sharing the gospel with the lost.
- * Satan would like nothing more than to put us asleep spiritually
- * God is calling us to make the gospel clear to those he brings across our path.
- * Grant Richison – We should begin our day with the prayer, “Lord, open doors for me to share the gospel. Bring people who need you across my path. Help me not to bungle the job. Please give me the courage, and may I not play the coward. Help me to make it clear. Put a divine imperative upon me.”
- * God has a heart for lost people and Christ followers should also.

NEXT STEPS

- * Join the Pastor's Prayer Partners and get a weekly prayer update and be involved in the prayer ministry of the church. If you want to sign up, contact Kristen in the office.
- * Keep involved in the 30-minute challenge of Bible Reading and Prayer. Read the chapters in our Bible reading plan for 2021.
- * Pray for your One who does not know Christ and look for an opportunity to invite them to church and share your personal testimony or the gospel with them.
- * Get involved in a Life Group this year whether in person or online.
- * Text, call, email somebody in your Life Group or in the church and encourage them.
- * Pray for revival to break out at Bethsaida, in our local churches, SBC and world and spiritual awakening to spread in our land. Join us on Wednesday nights at 6:30p.m. as we are looking at a Series on “Revival” and praying for revival and other urgent requests.
- * Seek to have a daily quiet time of Bible study and prayer with the Lord in 2021.
- * Start a Prayer Journal or Notebook or start using a prayer app. Keep a record of all your prayer requests and those answered prayer requests.
- * Try to incorporate solitude and silence in your life. Look at times where you can turn off the phone and technology and disconnect, and spend time with the Lord.