

Karl Buchan - Smith / General

Ephesians / Ephesians 6:18-20

Introduction

We continue with our 3-part sermon on how to stand strong in spiritual warfare.

1 Peter 5:8 ESV

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Peter commands the believers to be sober and alert.

The reason:

Satan is always walking.

The manner that he walks in is by constantly.

- roaring
- seeking to destroy or devour someone.

One thing I know about lions is that they mainly do two things: sleep, and stalk.

Male lions will sleep and snooze anything from 18- 20 hours a day and females 15-18.

Lions tend to stalk their prey and will at times ambush their pray.

Satan and His demons like a pack of lions will show up in the most unexpected places and unexpected times.

That's why you should always be alert and always be in prayer.

After the fall, we read the following.

Genesis 3:15 ESV

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

for 6000 years this battle has been raging between the kingdom of darkness, Satan and his followers (both demonic and human) with the children of God.

a little over 2000 years ago JC died on a cross for your sins, defeated death but also conquered Satan and His forces.

But even though Satan is defeated, the spiritual battle continues.

And it comes from the most unexpected places.

He might use another Christian, a family member, a close friend or even a church leader.

Jesus himself encountered an attack from Satan from one of his closest apostles Peter.

Peter was rebuked when he was trying to oppose the announcement of the gospel.

Matthew 16:23 ESV

²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Satan disguises himself as God's messenger (angel of light) and so do those who

serve him.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 ESV

¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

God's Word serves as divine spotlight exposing Satan's strategies.

But His word also reveals how we should respond as believer.

How do you respond?

You respond by becoming strong in the Lord.

You respond by being clothed in the armour of God.

You respond by standing firm in the battle.

And the means to do so is through prayer and being alert.

I will read our whole passage but will only focus this morning on vs 18-20.

Our focus is on prayer and being watchful.

Passage

Ephesians 6:10-20 ESV

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of

truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Proposition

4 Commands That Will Strengthen You to Stand Firmly in Spiritual Warfare:

1. Be strengthened in the Lord's power Vs 10
2. Be clothed in the full armour of God - vv11-13
 - So as to stand against the schemes - vv11
 - because of the struggle - vv12
 - So as to resist in the evil day – vv13
 - So as to stand having done all - vv13
3. Stand as you are clothed - vv14-16
4. Take your helmet and sword - vv17
 - praying - vv18
 - being watchful - vv19

Paul taught 4 commands that should be kept in order to stand firmly in spiritual battle.

1. be strengthened in Christ, in union with Christ vs 10
2. You are strengthened by being clothed with the full Armor of God.11
 - a. the goal of being clothed is so that you can stand against Satan's schemes
 - b. the reason you are to be clothed is because there is a spiritual battle with demonic being raging 12
 - c. a 2nd reason is so that you can resist in your lifetime and in times of intense spiritual battle and having done all to remain standing 13
3. Stand by means of being clothed with the full armour of God 14
 - a. fastened truth for a belt= being in a state of readiness by the truth of Christ and the gospel
 - b. putting on the breastplate of righteousness=which refers to the imputed righteousness (righteousness credited to the believer because they trusted in Christ that flows into your practical righteousness, your walk in holiness.
 - c. on your feet the shoes the readiness given by the gospel of peace=that you know you have peace with God and fellow believers because of the gospel (if there is no peace with fellow believers, it may be because they are enemies and still unbelievers or sin is active in the relationship) 15
 - d. The shield of faith= refers to your trust and dependence upon God and his words that extinguish Satan's temptations to distrust God and His word 16
4. take, or grasp the helmet and the sword 17

- a. The helmet of salvation= refers to the protective element of salvation, the sense of assurance of salvation provided by the HS or removed if you live in sin
- b. the sword of the spirit which is the word of God= refers to the specific relevant use of the word of God in context

Today we are looking at the last two points with regards to standing firm in spiritual warfare.

- Praying 18 -20
- Being watchful

Now we have learned that you are to **be strengthened** in Jesus.

You do this by being **clothed** in the armour so as to **stand** in spiritual struggle and resist.

You **stand** by means of being clothed and you also need to take the helmet (assurance of salvation) and the word of God.

But where does praying and keeping alert fit into this picture.

They explain the means by which you stand and take the helmet and the sword.

Praying and keeping alert reveal the how you stand and how you take the helmet and sword.

These words explain how you are stand and how you are to take the helmet and sword.

How do you stand?

- by means of being clothed with the various parts of armour
- by means of being in prayer and being alert

How do you take the helmet and the sword?

- by means of being in prayer and being alert

Let's have a look at these last two points.

1. Praying

Ephesians 6:18 ESV

¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

18 praying

Paul refers to prayer 4 times in vs 18 emphasising its vital importance.

Having God's armour helps you nothing unless you add prayer and watchfulness.

You need:

- His strength vs 10
- His resources vs 11 the armour of God

in spiritual battle vs 12

and the only means to appropriate this is by faith through prayer and keeping alert.

Just like a tank and their crew depend upon need fuel and ammunition to fight so, believers depend upon God in prayer in spiritual conflict.

Just as nuclear wars cannot be won with tanks or rifles.

So Spiritual conflict cannot be won by human effort, but by faith and prayer.

The **grammar** indicates:

- that the commands to stand vs 14 and grasp in vs 17 happens simultaneously with praying and keeping alert.
- that the participles praying and keeping alert are the means (the instrument) you use to stand and grasp the helmet and the sword.
- that praying and keeping alert is a lifestyle, an ongoing reality.

So, if you stop praying and stop being alert, essentially you remove your ability to stand and to grasp firmly your assurance of salvation and the ability to use His Word in the conflict.

So, we understand a bit **why praying is important**, but what is praying?

What is prayer?

The term was used in **GL**.

as the means to **address** a deity or to **request** something from a deity.

It often included an offering that was made to the gods.

As a believer that offering has been made permanently by Christ death on the cross and we now have confident access to God the Father.

Hebrews 4:16 ESV

¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

When Jesus died, the veil was torn to the Holy of holies indicating that through Christ you can have access to God the Father without barriers.

In the JL prayer referred to

- [Ex 8:8-9](#) pleading,
- [Num 11:2](#) interceding
- [Gen 28:20](#) making a vow
- [Gen 20:7](#) praying

Praying in the OT was what constituted a **relationship** with God.

- [2 Kings 19:15](#) Prayer was directed towards God
- [Ps 35:18](#) They prayed as a congregation
- [Ps 34:4](#) They expected God to answer
- [1Sam 1:10-11](#), [Is 44:8-20](#) We see how they knew that God was not a dead idol
- [Ex 32:11-14](#) they wrestled with God in prayer
- [Ps 105:1](#) they thanked God
- [Jer 29:12-14](#) true prayer came from the heart
- [Is 29:13](#) false prayer came only from the lips
- [Dt 1:43-45](#) sin hindered their prayers

- OT sadly spiritual leaders began to ritualize prayer to specific prayer times, specific passages and specific benedictions.

Prayer in the NT

- was personal affectionate like a child to his father addressing Him as Father Mt 6:6-9
- There was a greater assurance that God would hear your prayers [Mrk 11:24](#)
- there was a **variety** of prayers
 - to be justified [Luk 18:10-14](#)
 - for the HS [Luk 11:13](#)
 - to stand clothed in the armour of God
 - to overcome anxieties [Phil 4:6](#)
- Various types of prayers
 - [Rom 15:30](#) Intercession
 - [Rev 4:8-11](#) praise and adoration
 - [1 Cor 11:4-5](#) , [Acts 2:42,46-47](#) Communal, corporate
- Various postures
 - kneeling [Acts 21:5](#)
 - standing [Luk 18:11](#)
 - Lifting their hands [1 Tim 2:8](#)

- **Hindrances** included
 - [James 4:3](#) asking to spend upon your own passions
 - [1 Pet 3:7](#) not living with your wife in an understanding manner
 - [James 1:5-7](#) unbelief
 - [Mt 5:23-24](#) unforgiveness

Prayer is the al pervasive strategy in which the battle is fought.

In summary prayer is talking with God, loving him, praising him, thanking him, appealing to him, enjoying Him.

Our passage provides some key truths about prayer in the ongoing spiritual battle.

1. It should be pervasive.

How often should you pray?

Pauls answer.

at all times

The Jews had several prescribed times for daily prayers.

But with the birthing of the church and the new covenant, the admonition was to pray continuously.

At every occasion, every opportunity unceasingly

The question should not be when shall we have a prayer meeting?

rather is should be why are you not praying in this prayer meeting which has never ended.

Jesus urged his disciples to pray **always** and not lose heart.

Luke 18:1 ESV

¹ And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

Paul urged the Thessalonians to pray.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 ESV

¹⁷ pray without ceasing,

This does not imply:

- that you're in a constant formal prayer
- nor continuously doing ritualized prayers, which are recited like the Muslims do prayers, which are precisely prescribed

Matthew 6:7 ESV

⁷ “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

To pray at all times is to live in a continual God consciousness, where everything you see and experience becomes a kind of prayer, lived in a deep awareness of surrender to God. (Macarthur)

It means that when you're tempted.

- you ask his help

when you experience something great

- you thank God

when you see evil

- you ask God to correct it

when you meet an unbeliever

- you pray for their salvation

when you encounter sufferings and trials

- you ask his wisdom and ask for his deliverance and enablement to sustain you

when you're washing the dishes

- you're rejoicing in the Lord for the privilege of serving

when you're mowing the garden

- your praising God for His creation

When you're preparing for your business meeting

- you're praying and asking God for wisdom and discernment

It is involves having constant communion with the Lord Jesus.

It's the acid test of your relationship with God.

There are several tests in life, like the test of orthodoxy, or the test of life which involves your conduct, your behaviour.

But the most vital test for the condition of your relationship with God is your personal prayer life.

Application:

Do you pray like this continuously?

Do you have this kind of relationship with Jesus?

Or is Jesus only a small 15 second conversation as you race to get dressed every day?

Child of God don't deprive yourself from having conversations with your creator.

The greater the saint, the greater amount of prayer

Jesus our ultimate example, one who was constantly filled with the HS, was constantly in prayer, to such a degree that the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray.

In [Acts 6](#) , we see how the apostles understood that their most important role involved prayer and Gods word

Acts 6:4 ESV

⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

The more you grow in your walk, the more you see your need to pray.

A fatal attitude to prayer is being self-satisfied.

When?

- you don't realize your own weaknesses and inabilities
- measure yourself with other believers who you see as struggling and think I am doing much better, so I don't need prayer

Praying at all times means by implication that your mind is not passive, empty but that you're obeying the command but have a mind that is constantly

occupied with Jesus.

Colossians 3:2 ESV

² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

May your life be a glorious feast of fellowshiping with Jesus.

You do not start fellowship with God only when you're in heaven.

It starts now.

John 17:3 ESV

³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Eternal life starts at salvation, and it involves knowing God.

The next principle we see in prayer reveals the character of true prayer.

in the Spirit,

The HS is the sphere in which true prayers take place.

This does not refer to praying in tongues, this is not mentioned here at all.

This is not the repeating of sounds, babbling which people learn and claim to be the gift of tongues.

Tongues: was a sign gift, which served to confirm that a preacher was Gods messenger.

The preacher received a Spirit given ability to speak not in a heavenly language, but in a dialect or language that they had never learned.

Acts 2:8 ESV

⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

What the preacher spoke was heard by various cultural groups in their own mother dialect.

Acts 2:11 ESV

¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

So, what does pray in the spirit refer to?

It would imply.

- to pray in the name of Christ and the authority of Christ
- to pray consistently with His **nature** and **will**

1 John 5:14–15 ESV

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

- to pray in union with the Spirit, who helps us in our weaknesses.

Romans 8:26–27 ESV

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

- that you're in Christ through repentance and faith in the gospel, (believer)

and that you have access through the HS to God the Father now

Ephesians 2:18 ESV

¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Practically it means that you're praying in submission and obedience to God and His word.

Its understanding that its let they will be done and not mine

Its understanding that your prayer will be answered if it lines up with the will of Christ, His word and His purposes.

In spiritual battle, as a believer, your prayer must line up with the will of your commander and chief who is Jesus.

Do you know what happens in a battle if a soldier just decides to do his own thing,

Let's say you called to go a fight, and you simply request your corporal, that your tired and you would like to go to the wimpy for an ice-cream.

There is no way under the sun that your request will be answered in a favourable manner.

Why?

This does not line up with the will of those in leadership.

As we submit to the HS, we submit to God and His word and are drawn into a deeper fellowship with God.

with all prayer and supplication.

The next principle we see is that in spiritual battle, there is a variety of prayers.

The term prayer is the general term for prayer.

The term supplication refers to petitions, (Specific request, urgent requests to

meet a need, exclusively addressed to God)

The use of both terms carries the idea of using all kinds of prayer are implied, obviously in the spirit as mentioned before.

The 2nd

2. Being alert

Ephesians 6:18-20 ESV

¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

To that end, keep alert.

So, the believer stands and receives the helmet and the sword by means of praying and by means of being alert.

The term keep alert was used in the.

GL= to seize by hunting, the idea of hunting after sleep, where was derived the meaning of being awake

JL =Keep alert, to keep awake, LXX to be watchful and guard, to lie awake
8times

Ezra 8:29 ESV

²⁹ Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of fathers' houses in Israel at Jerusalem, within the chambers of the house of the LORD.”

NT

To be alert, concerned about

Luke 21:36 ESV

³⁶ But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The idea of being awake, on guard, and alert, to be watching for potential threat, to be vigilant. It's what Jesus instructed his apostles to be at the garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 21:36 ESV

³⁶ But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

When I was on the Angola border war, my commander told me to stay in my vehicle and watch a specific direction. The whole unit was depended upon me for safety, and I know that during that time I kept on scanning the edges of the bush for any sign of enemy.

It's that kind of alertness were talking about.

So, Keeping alert

Scanning, being focussed, watchful.

with all perseverance,

The means by which you remain alert is by steadfastness, perseverance.

There can never be a time in which you are not alert.

Means to persist obstinately.

GL it was used to be strong, to bear patiently.

JL referred to endurance even in martyrdom.

NT firm persistence in undertaking or circumstances, the idea of persistent determination

Being alert is tiring, its serious work and its part of spiritual battle.

It saps your energy and that's by alertness only continues as you persevere.

And you cannot do so in your own strength that's why you do so in prayer and dependence upon Christ strength.

Relaxing is easy, but alert requires stickability.

Like a bulldog in a fight who locks its jaw and even if you put a hosepipe down its throat, it remains committed.

making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me,

the 2nd means for remaining alert is through prayer.

supplication, Specific and urgent request requests to meet a need.

Prayer:

- sets your mind on Christ
- its not passive
- it involves trusting in God
- It's having fellowship with God

And so, prayer makes you alert.

And being alert keeps you in prayer.

If you're not alert you do not see the need for prayer.

Note that this is not a battle of individuals.

It's a corporate battle.

Every believer is in the fight.

There are many believers who stand but many more:

- are not standing,
- are not alert

being alert also means that to love and care enough that you are in prayer for the spiritual needs of your fellow believers.

The ultimate goal in spiritual warfare is gospel proclamation.

Satan ultimately wants to hinder that.

The means of standing is by prayer and alertness,

But the end purpose or goal is bold gospel proclamation.

Boldly =

GL = the sense of freedom to say whatever you wished

JL = emphasised the sense of confidence in speaking

NT = openness, frankness, freedom to speak, despite being in prison that he would have the state of confidence, courage and fearlessness to speak.

The reality is that sharing the gospel can be a very scary thing to do.

- you don't know how people will respond
- you fight an internal battle
- you may even be scared that they will ask you things you do not know how to respond to.
- And not only that the evil one will if he can distract you in many ways from going out and sharing the gospel.

Gods' solution to this is being in prayer and being alert in your heart,

Know:

- what thoughts come from God and what are from the world
- what are excuses because you have fear
- whatever other excuse you may have.

May I encourage you to bring that thought to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And ask yourself what Jesus' perspective is on the matter.

so that you too can state like Paul

Romans 1:16 ESV

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Paul had boldly proclaimed the gospel, and it landed him in prison.

And now in prison he continues to ask for boldness to share the gospel.

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may

declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

And it's amazing what God can do through a man who boldly proclaims the gospel no matter what they face.

This boldness comes from hearts that have been devoting themselves to prayer.

The Apostles serve as a wonderful example of how prayer changed a fearful heart into a bold heart to proclaim the gospel.

After Peter and John had

Conclusion1

he