

Ephesians 6:10-24

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[0 : 00] Ephesians, you're in Ephesians chapter 6 starting in verse 10. If you're physically able and desire to do so I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God with one another starting in the 10th verse. Paul writes, finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might and put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

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. Therefore take up the full armor of God so that you will be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm. Stand firm therefore having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

In addition to all taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.

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. 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.

[1 : 22] For with which I am an ambassador in chains that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. But that you also may know about my circumstances how I am doing.

Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister and 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.

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.

Let's pray. Lord we thank you so much for this day. So thankful that we have the opportunity of gathering together with brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lord realizing that we need the encouragement not only of the fellowship but we need the encouragement of the word. So Lord we pray that your word would speak to our hearts and minds. We pray that the truth of it Lord would resonate within us.

[2 : 24] And Lord that we would grasp those truths and have a desire to apply them for your glory. We pray that the power of your spirit would be in this place. And that Lord that you would remove every barrier, every hindrance, and every obstacle.

Lord speak to us now for we want to listen. And we ask it all in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. In writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul has encouraged them with sound doctrine.

He has challenged them with practical application. And now he wants to ensure them that they are fully equipped. He writes the church and in this letter we find no cause for concern in this church.

That is there's no specific problem that he is addressing. If you remember so many weeks ago when we introduced the book of Ephesians. We introduced it with the reality that in the earliest manuscripts of this writing.

Instead of writing to the church at Ephesus. It says to the church and there's a blank. That is he was writing a letter which he intended to go to Ephesus first.

[3 : 35] And then been circulated around the churches of that region. So this was a letter to the churches. It was a letter given to the followers of Jesus Christ. So that they may know what they believe.

And believe what they know and live accordingly. He has provided for them in the first three chapters. Great sound doctrine. Starting in chapter four.

He moves from doctrine to application. He deals with our relationship with one another in the church. He deals with who we are as individuals. He deals with how we live as a husband and wife within the home.

He deals with how we parent our children. And even how we behave as employees and employers. He touches every aspect of society in its application. Because biblical truth deserves and demands application in all areas of our life.

And he has called us to live accordingly. The reality of understanding what it is we should know. And making an attempt to live how we should live.

[4 : 39] Will inevitably lead to a struggle. That is to say living the life of a faithful Christian is not easy. When you have sound doctrine.

And you couple that with a desire of biblical application. My friend I can assure you that the enemy is going to start moving. You don't have to be concerned when the enemy of your souls is fighting against you.

The greatest concern is when he leaves you alone. Because he doesn't see you as a threat to be posed. The fact that we are engaged in a warfare should be an encouragement.

And also a motivation to go see what we must do. Paul ends this letter by showing us what a fully equipped saint looks like.

And I want you to see that this morning. Being a fully equipped saint. He starts out with this reality that he shows us the provision of strength that is given to us.

[5 : 41] He says finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Now I want you to mark this and I want you to know this. That you have never been called to resist the enemy or to fight the battles in your own strength.

You have never been called to fight and wage warfare. Spiritual warfare that is coming against you or on behalf of another. According to your own abilities. Sure greater is he that is in you than is he in the world.

But my friend you are not greater than the one who is the prince of this world. We are reminded in scripture that when God created legions and legions of angels. That a full third of the heavenly hosts evidently followed in rebellion.

And they fell from their position in glory. And they reign in this realm now. We are not here to really kind of get into all the realms of the spiritual places. And all those things.

But we see that their grand leader. While we would love to think that Satan comes at us with a horns and a pitchfork. And his tail and all the depictions that we see. We understand that that is not how it happens.

[6 : 45] But we also know the reality that being a created heavenly being. He is one of just really wondrous power and glory. He is not all powerful.

He is not all glorious. He is not omnipotent. He is not omniscient. He is not all these things. He cannot be all places at one time. He is limited to space and time. But the reality that we find in scripture is that even the archangel Michael could not oppose Satan on his own.

You remember when Daniel started praying. God immediately sent Michael to go answer Daniel's prayer. Daniel was delayed in getting because he said that he was opposed by the enemy of man's soul.

And he relied and he wrestled and he fought against that adversary. This great adversary. Until help could come. So if the archangel Michael can't oppose him on their own friend. Neither can you. But the Bible tells us that the fully equipped saint doesn't stand in his own strength.

You don't stand on your own ability. Paul reminds us here and he declares to us. He says be strong in the Lord. And in the strength of his might.

[7 : 48] Here is the good news. The good news according to the gospel is that Jesus Christ has delivered you from the realm of Satan. The good news is that he has redeemed you.

That you were a captive of Satan and a stronger man went into the house as Jesus would say. A man cannot bind a strong man unless a stronger one comes in. You couldn't defeat the one who had you bound but a stronger one showed up.

And that's good news because the stronger one came into the house. He bound Satan and he led you out. He called you from it. The book of Ephesians says that God delivered you from the realm of Satan. Now here is the good news.

If he can deliver you from it then he can empower you to oppose it. Right? If he has already won the battle then he can give you victory in the middle of the conflict. But you cannot do it on your own. The book of Proverbs tells us that a man cannot ransom his brother because he cannot even redeem his own soul. You don't have the means or the wherewithal to buy your own ransom. You are dependent upon someone else.

[8 : 46] But the good news is there is someone else. And that someone else has come and he loves you and he pursues you and he calls you and he redeems you. And friend don't cast off the Savior at salvation.

Because you need him every moment. Right? You need him every day. You don't go to him for salvation. You go to him because he's your Savior. You go to him for sustaining you. You go for him for each and every day. You don't go for him because you need him to forgive you. You go to him because you need him to empower you. The Bible says, therefore, finally my brothers be strong in the Lord.

So many people, they want to cry out to Christ when the moment is hard. They want to cry out to Christ in a moment of desperation. They need a Savior because they know they're wretched. And oh, my friend, they get up and they leave him there.

Don't leave him there. Let him take you somewhere. And as he takes you somewhere, he's going to take you into the battle. He's going to take you into the conflict. But the wonderful thing is, the Bible says, I told you I'd get excited.

[9 : 44] I'm trying to stay close to the pulpit, right? I'm trying my best, brother, to stay here. The wonderful thing is that Jesus says the church exists to push back the gates of hell. That is, the church is on the offensive.

And when you push against gates, you have a little problem. I don't mind you coming to my house. But if the gate at the end of my driveway is closed, you better be welcomed if you're pushing against the gate, right?

I tell people all the time, and you might not want to hear your pastor say this. They said, well, they talk to me normally as pastor. They said, well, you've got a lot of ups and hills in your driveway. I said, right.

And the moment you crest the first hill, you're in sight. I said, you're in range and you're in sight.

That is, we see you before you see us. And most people step back and they go, oh.

I had a gentleman the other day. He was there, and he kind of thought he was making a little funny. And he's like, yeah. He said, this is one of those places you can get lost. He said, I remember back in the day, people always had pigs. I said, well, you need to stop right there because I've got pigs in the back.

[10 : 43] And he said, well, this is getting worse and worse. He said, yeah. He said, I worked at a sawmill. I used to come get a sawmill to cover up the central. I said, well, we have a sawmill in the front. He said, I'm just leaving. I said, I'm not saying I'm going to do anything. I'm just telling you that everything you're describing is here.

So don't push against the gates because the gates are for a purpose. But the Bible declares to us that the church is to push against the gates of Satan. And therefore, when we're pushing against those gates and the Lord is leading us in the offensive, then we ought to expect a conflict. But he never sends us into the battle without equipping us with the power we need to win the battle. Right? That's why it says that we ought to be strong in the Lord. What does this tell us? Friend, you ought to expect a conflict.

Therefore, you ought or you desperately need to be close to the Savior. You need to be walking with him every day. If you cannot be strong in him, if you're nowhere near him, I can promise you, we never lose a battle in the Lord.

But we lose a number of them in ourselves. And the strength of his might. There are just some places that the enemy wants to tempt us to go that God hasn't called us to be there yet as individuals.

[11 : 54] So don't walk forward in your own strength. Move forward cautiously, wisely, and as the Lord leads. Right? We see the provision of strength.

There is a conflict for sure. But there is a provision of strength. He is going to equip you and empower you to fight the enemy who opposes you. Number two.

We ought to see a properly identified enemy. That is, if you're going to battle, you need to know who you're fighting against. You need to understand this. The Bible tells us, for our struggle, verse 12, don't worry, I'm coming back to verse 11.

Okay? Verse 12 says, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Now just stop right there. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. That is, the enemy you're fighting is not one another. And it's not even the people that don't like you or the people, and we don't need to really say this, that we might not like. Right? Your enemy is not one another. I had this discussion with one of our children just yesterday.

[12:58] We got to talking about things. I said, you know, hatred is not a bad thing. The Bible says that God hates sin, and God hates that. It's okay to hate things, but the Bible never says that God hates people.

He hates the deeds of the people. He hates what they're being led to do. He hates how they're rebelling against him. He opposes people, the prideful look and the haughty heart, and he opposes those.

But we need to understand this reality. Friend, listen, we're not fighting people. So this tells us that our battleground is going to look a little different. Even though people may oppose us, we read church history, and we can read the accounts of the martyrs, and we can see how so many of them suffered for their faith.

And still to this day, people are being persecuted for their faith. And we go, oh, how could they do that? It's because they have a properly identified enemy. The enemy is not the one who's doing all the work and even the atrocious things that are being done to them.

That's not the enemy. They're fighting the battle in a different realm. You can oppose man all day long, but you're fighting the wrong person. Look at what it says. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood.

[14:12] Well, that's something that every one of us need to surrender. I need to give that up, too. But against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

That is, the prince of this world. These are the very ones, by the way, that Paul, earlier in the book of Ephesians, says that God has delivered us through Christ from the powers of the heavenly places.

He has delivered us from the spiritual forces of darkness. So be not surprised that the one who opposes you is the very one that Christ set you free from. Man, if man did not have you ransomed, if man did not have you captived, then man is not your enemy.

The very one that you have been delivered from is the one who opposes you. And you see this, and it tells us that our battlefield is in a different realm. It says, in the heavenly places.

So we don't fight this the same way we would fight every other battle. This is a spiritual battle. It's a spiritual realm. And I know somebody said, oh, you're going to mess up and get a little Baptical on us.

[15:21] You're going to take this a little too far. And let's not be afraid of the spiritual realm in the world where the word of God tells us about it. Sometimes I think our ignorance of that realm is what's kept us so captive by it.

It tells us that that's where the battle is being fought, and therefore that's where we should do our greatest efforts. And we see this in this reality.

He tells us that we need to properly identify our enemy because if you don't identify him, you run the risk of exerting so much energy wrestling against the wrong foe.

Yesterday, I was at a basketball game. And I was watching this basketball game. It was fifth grade boys, fifth and fourth grade boys. And the ball went up. Three kids jumped up and got the rebound. And oh, they were fighting. It was a good, they were wrestling against one of them. The problem is, is that all three of them were wearing the same color jersey. I mean, they were struggling. They were fighting. One was on the back of the other, and they were going to town on it.

[16:18] And, you know, it wasn't our team, so I just let them do it. You know, it's whatever. They can wrestle all they want to. But they were wrestling one another. They all had the same color jersey on. And we laugh about it.

We say, well, that happened. But we do it so often. We spend more energy and more effort wrestling flesh and blood than we do the spiritual forces of darkness. We get mad because

somebody did something, but we could care less when Satan himself is doing it. We get more upset and more bent out of shape because somebody is doing something somewhere that we don't agree with rather than being upset at the enemy that's empowering somebody to do it. And I'm speaking to myself. We see this reality that we need to properly identify the enemy so that we can fight the battle in the right realm.

And we need to make sure that we're focusing there. Because if that's where the enemy is, then that's where we ought to be advancing towards. The provision of strength of properly identified enemy.

[17:18] Number three, the personal responsibility of action. That is, there's things you have to do. There are things that I have to do. Oh, this text, it's full of action words.

It's full of things that we must do. You say, oh, pastor, salvation is all of the Lord. Right? We've got that out of the way in the doctrine and the theology. Right? We've already studied all that doctrine that you are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

That he redeemed you before the foundation of the world lay. That he pursued you. And all these things, those are over there. Those are great. But the application side, friend, listen to me. The doctrines are wondrous, but the application requires action.

That is, there's something you ought to do. Paul says to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Everybody has the same amount of muscles in their body. Some of them work them out a little bit more.

What happens to the muscles all depends on how they're being worked. Right? Paul says if you've been saved and redeemed and work it out, do something with it.

[18:21] Put forth some effort. Exert a little bit of energy. And then he tells us here, look at what it says. It's all these action words. Put on the full armor of God. Nobody's going to come and clothe you.

You're going to have to do it yourself. Some translations say put on for yourselves the full armor of God. Oh, if you're not fully clothed, it's nobody's fault but your own.

Around our house, a lot of times on Saturday nights, the discussion's always going to be, I don't usually have this discussion because I just wing it when I get up. Okay? It's whatever I feel like. Like I don't know what I'm going to wear to church in the morning.

That's the discussion that always goes around the house. And I usually answer this way. I say, well, I would suggest clothes because people find it awkward if you don't. You're going to have to put something on.

But I'm not going to put it on for you after a certain age. Right? You need to put on. It says to put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

[19:23] What does this tell us? If you're falling flat on your face, it's not because the strength hasn't been provided and the means aren't available. It's because we're not putting it on. There's a personal responsibility.

Lord, I wish that you would help me in this. Lord, I wish that you would deliver me from this. Lord, I wish that you would take me out of this. The Lord is saying, I have already redeemed you. I've already saved you. I've already given you the strength here. You just have to apply it, my friend. You have to put it on. And then he says again, he declares, just in case we missed it the first time, therefore take up the full armor of God. Put it on. Take it up. You have to do something. You have to pick it up. Right?

You're going to have to take it up. You're going to do all these things. And he starts going through all these pieces. And we should have put a visual up here on the screen. You know, Paul is in prison. He's probably looking at a Roman soldier. You know, the Roman soldiers are so awesome at that time.

And history, like the Navy SEALs of the day. Right? They were fully clothed, fully prepared, and could win so many battles. And I should have put it there so you could see. And he starts looking at every single piece. And he said, just like this soldier put on his armor, you need to put on your armor.

[20:24] And each piece matters. And he starts with this belt. The belt of truth. Right? You ought to put on the belt of truth. Why? Because truth holds it all together.

Friend, if you don't know what absolute truth is, figure it out. Because without truth, everything else falls flat. There is a such thing of truth. There is a such thing as absolute truth.

I believe when Jesus says, I am the way, the life, and the truth that he is truth. I believe in an absolute truth. It is what God has said is true, though every man be found a liar. Some say, oh, there's no such thing as absolute truth. It's your truth and my truth. They can be different. Ah, that's baloney. That's an impossibility. It can't happen. What you say can't be true. If what I say is true, it just can't happen. There is a such thing. And you need to know the truth. Well, where are you going to find truth? It's in the word of God. What's going to hold it all together for you?

[21 : 18] It's the truth. You need to know what God has said, not what man has opinioned. Whoever, no matter how scholarly the individual is, no matter how friendly they are, no matter how persuasive they may be, no matter how charismatic they can seem, you need to know the truth.

That is why I say get in the word, get in the word, get in the word, get in the word, get in the word. Thy word is truth. Right? You need to know the word. You need to understand what it says. And you need to know these things because it's what holds it all together. It's the belt. It's there. It holds every piece on with care. And you need to put it on. You, yourself. You say, oh, well, I listen to Christian music and I come to church and that's great.

That's great. I'm thankful for that. But get in the word of God. Know what is true. It says take up the full armor of God. Therefore, standing firm.

Therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate protects the heart and the lungs and all the internal bowels. All the important stuff. Right? Righteousness. To be right in the presence of God.

[22 : 24] Not your own righteousness, but his imputed righteousness. The righteousness of Christ and a righteous life. Our friend, I'll tell you something. The thing that causes us to lead forward boldly is to know that we're walking in righteousness.

Because guilt of the heart tends to slow the progress. You ought to have this breastplate of righteousness. Right? And having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. That is moving forward with the gospel. Having on your feet the shoes. Roman soldiers often in their shoes would have spikes in them so that they didn't lose traction. And they could move forward.

And they had these cleaves around their shins there to protect their shins. Because nothing hurts worse than getting the shin bone knocked out. Right? And they would have these things right here. It says the thing that's going to cause you to go through briars and thickets and all this stuff. And it would cause you not to lose traction. Is the gospel of peace. Because friend, even though we're in the middle of a battle. It is the gospel that brings peace to the hearts and minds and souls of individuals. And it's being prepared to proclaim that gospel.

[23 : 24] And not losing traction in that gospel. He says, and then having all that take up the shield of faith. Right? Oh, the Roman shield was so much further advanced than everyone else. And sometimes they were steel.

Sometimes they were wood. And they were overlaid with this leather. Multiple layers of leather. And they would often get them wet. And you've seen the pictures where they would unite shields to shields. This is the big shield, by the way. The word he uses is not the little shield.

It's the big shield. And it would cover your whole body. And as the Roman legion would move forward. They would actually connect shield to shield in the front. And then the ones behind them would go over them. So literally they would advance up onto a wall.

Impenetrable. And they would shoot the darts at them. The arrows that had flames. And they would just hit the shields. And it would be quenched because they were soaked in water. And the Roman soldiers could come forward. Friend, listen. I promise you. As you advance in your faith.

And as you advance pushing back darkness. The enemy doesn't like it. And he's shooting darts over the wall. And he's hoping to penetrate. You don't want to be the king that we find in the Old Testament.

[24 : 21] Who was there and a random arrow was drawn at chance. And went into the link of his armor. And it killed him. Right? We know that God directed that. God knew what he was doing. Because that king had been condemned by God already.

But just a random arrow drawn and shot at random. And it happened to hit this guy right in the link of his armor. You don't want to be that guy. So have this shield of faith. Faith is that which covers everything else. Faith is the confidence assurance of things not seen.

Right? It is not a hope that these may come true. It is the assurance that they will come true. And you need to have that faith. Because Satan loves to tempt us with this. And then he moves forward. By the way, this is the only one you don't do yourself. It says, and take the helmet of salvation. I love how one translation says, the Legacy Standard Bible says it this way.

Accept the helmet of salvation. The helmet of salvation to guard your head. You don't do that. You accept it. And this quotation that he quotes is from Isaiah 59.

[25 : 21] In Isaiah 59, when he's quoting this helmet of salvation passage. Isaiah is writing. He's depicting God. And God is looking down upon earth. And God sees that man is lost. And man is there.

And God sees that there is no man that can save anyone there. So it says that God himself took up the helmet of salvation. And came and saved and redeemed man. So the only one doing the work of the helmet of salvation is God himself.

He does the work. We just accept it. Because it protects our minds. Because I don't know if you realize it or not. But one way the enemy comes against you is because it causes you to doubt your salvation.

Accept it. You don't have to take it. You accept it. You don't have to put it on. You just accept it. It says that he's given to you in scripture. If you've surrendered your life to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

And you've given him that. And the word of God declares that truth. And it says that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. These are truths that I promise you. The enemy causes to come against your mind. So protect your head with the reality of an accepted salvation.

[26 : 24] One thing I want you to see here. If you go all the way back. It says in verse 13. That if we take up the full armor of God.

So that we will be able to resist in the evil day. And having done everything to stand firm. The reality is that this is this day. We are told in Ephesians 4 and following.

That we ought to redeem the time knowing that the days are evil. He tells us also that it is against the schemes of the devil. So let me just stop right here as we're clothing ourselves.

The word scheme is a very particular word in the original language. It means that your enemy has a very distinct plan for attacking you. Hey the battle you face is not going to be the same battle I face. But we have an enemy who does his advanced preparation. And he has a particular plan that he knows your weaknesses. He knows my weaknesses.

[27 : 27] And the way he attacks is done with intentionality. It's a scheme. He's just not going out there flailing around right. Because we have no problem opposing anybody who's running at us.

And oh that doesn't look right. I'm going to take care of him. Get him out of here right. We have no problem with that. It's that kind of guerrilla warfare where he knows where you're going to be. When you're going to be. And he resists in a particular way.

He's got a scheme. And he does it with intentionality. Therefore we ought to battle with intentionality. You know where that is. I know where it is in my life.

And you know where it is in your life. So therefore since we know it. Now we ought to be just as intentional to equip ourselves. That we can resist. That helmet of salvation. And I love this.

I preached this passage before. Not as going through it. But I know I've preached it before. And I said oh there's only one offensive weapon. And I stand corrected. Because the more I say scripture. The more I stand corrected.

[28 : 21] But let's look at the first offensive weapon. It says and take up the sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God. Take up the sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God. The word word there is not logos. Logos means the entire word of God.

Genesis to Revelation. The word word there. The word word there. Is rhema. That means a particular word. So if you're looking at a Roman soldier.

It's not the long sword that's outside. It's one of the many short swords that he has on him. Most Roman soldiers would have upwards of five daggers as well. And so what Paul is saying.

Is that when your enemy attacks you specifically. You take out the specific sword to fight that battle. You get out the rhema. That is there's a passage of scripture for every battle you're facing.

Know why you need to know it? It's because everything that your enemy is coming against you.

Now think Jesus in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. Jesus didn't throw in the beginning. God created the heavens and the earth at Satan.

[29 : 19] Right? He threw particular passages of scripture. At the enemy that was coming against him. In a particular attack. You need to know the rhema. That is the word that speaks to that problem.

You have a problem in your life. You have a weakness in your life. Friend listen to me. Learn the rhema in that area of your life. Whatever it is. But here's the good news. It says the sword of the spirit.

Not the sword of man. So when you pull the sword out. You're not pulling your sword out. You're pulling the spirit's sword out. And I love this. Because it's the sword of the spirit. You unsheathe it but he wields it.

That is the spirit. The Holy Spirit uses it to defeat the enemy. Because this is a spiritual battle.

Right? So you don't have to go find him. You don't have to go do all this other stuff. You unsheathe the word of God that speaks to that problem.

And you let the spirit deal with the enemy. Because that's his sword. It is the sword of the spirit. Not the sword of man. But you need to know which one to take out. So that he can use it. Because God does not create robots.

[30 : 21] And just in case. That you are afraid that this sword isn't strong enough. When we open up the book of revelations. We meet a risen savior. Who's coming back on a white horse.

And he's coming back to fight this battle. And when he fights this battle. The saints are behind him clothed in white. I love that. You know that I love that. Because we wear white to the bloodiest battle ever fought. And the reason we wear white.

Is because we're not doing any fighting. And he says that he slays the enemy. With a sword which proceeds out of his mouth. So he slays the enemy. All of the enemies that oppose him. All those that are against him.

With a sword that comes out of his mouth. And it says. And the sword which comes out of his mouth. Is the word of God. So if it can win the greatest battle of all times. And it can win the battle. You're in the midst of.

And it's the sword of the spirit. We see this here. In our personal responsibilities. Fourth and finally. And we'll see the second offensive weapon.

[31 : 17] That overlooked so many years. And it is our prayerfully sustained connection. A prayerfully sustained connection. So we are tempted here.

To stop with the sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God. But Paul doesn't stop. He says. And with all prayer and petition. Pray at all times. There's your second offensive weapon. Praying. Prayer.

And with all prayer and petition. Pray at all times. In the spirit. Friend listen to me. A prepared saint. Is a praying saint. When you have been equipped.

To resist the enemy. In your own life. Then you are empowered. To petition the king. For the sake of someone else. More prayers. More prayers are hindered. Because we're too busy.

Losing our battles. We can say amen to that. That's okay. More prayers are hindered. For others. Because we're too busy. Trying to fight. Our own skirmishes.

[32 : 16] On our own. But when we have been. Fully equipped. And we have been. Fully. Prepared. To resist the enemy. In our own life. Then we are empowered.

To petition the king. Of kings. And lord of lords. On behalf of someone else. That is. When we win our own victories. We get to fight for somebody else. Now I love that. Right. I love it. When I can join with somebody else.

If I'm ever in the middle of something. I want somebody to come join in with me. Okay. I may be confident in my own abilities. But I love it. When I have somebody else. Come join in too. Because then it emboldens us. Right. You may be winning your victory.

But there may be a brother or sister. Beside you. Who's not. But the good news is. Is that the moment you were winning your victory. You are now empowered. To go to the king. On behalf of them. And to fight their big battle too. You can fight for them.

And with them. Because this is an offensive battle. You get to not just sit by passively. And go. Oh I'm glad I'm not going through that. You say. Oh they're going through something. God has delivered me through mine. And God is delivering me.

[33 : 12] And I don't want to be. You know. Kind of lackadaisical. And what I've got going on. But now I have the ability to pray. And I don't have to pray so much for myself. Because I've already

taken up my armor. I don't have to petition so much for myself.

So I can pray at all times. With all petitions and prayers. It says. In the spirit. For all the saints. So I ought to be petitioning on behalf of everybody else. And I'm joining in this battle.

And we're fighting together. And victory leads to victory. And we move forward. And we move forward. And then all of a sudden. There's a fervency that comes. Because the more I've won my victory. And then the more I see this person win their victory. Then hey.

Then we can go start praying for somebody else. And we see them win their victory. And then all of a sudden. We're praying for somebody else. And they're winning their victory. And you better watch out. Because a revival might take off. And you might be having real prayer service.

In just a moment. You know. Because then all of a sudden. People are being delivered. People are being set free. And it's nothing that you're doing. You're just fighting with someone else. Right. You have a part and a place there.

[34 : 06] Because you are uniting with them. You are fighting for them. You are fighting with them. And the Bible says that you're on the offensive. Not doing anything at all. But praying. And what a wonderful gift it is. And Paul says.

I need it. I need it. I need it. I've been so overwhelmed this week. Realizing. Paul requests all these believers. I need your prayers. Pray for me. I need your prayers. Pray for me. If Paul needed their prayers.

Don't we? Who are we to say. I don't need the prayers of everybody else. I'm okay. Paul says. I need it. I need it. I need it. Now let me give you a side note here.

This is a good one. Paul says. I need your prayers. Pray for me. So that I may give utterance. He says in verse 19. He says. Pray on my behalf. That others may be given to me.

In the opening of my mouth. And I may make known. The boldness of the midst of the gospel. For with which. Or for which. I am an ambassador in chains. Let me just stop right there. I'm an ambassador in chains. Paul did not let his circumstances.

[35 : 00] That is in chains. Define his calling. That is an ambassador. Paul says. I'm an ambassador. Now I'm in chains. But I'm still an ambassador.

Paul did not let his circumstances. Therefore being in chains. Define his calling. Paul did not say. I'm a prisoner in chains. He said. No. I'm in chains. But I'm an ambassador.

Because I have a Lord. Who's greater than the one. Who imprisoned me. And since the one. Who is appointed me. Is greater than the one. Who imprisoned me. Then he must want me. To be an ambassador. Here for you. Listen to me. I don't know.

I don't know. What all your circumstances are. But I know. That you cannot let your circumstances. Define your calling. Paul says. I'm not going to do it. I may be in chains now. But I'm still an ambassador.

And he did not let. Not only define his calling. He also did not let it. Stifle his obedience. He said. I need you to pray for me. So that even though. I'm in chains. I realize. I'm still called. To be an ambassador.

[35 : 55] And therefore. I need your prayer. So that I can be faithfully declared. I'm going to keep preaching. Is what he says. He said. I have to. Because that's what he appointed me to do. And I'm going to do it. Until he calls me home.

Because my calling doesn't change. Until the job is over. And you say. Well how do you know. When the job is over. That's good. When you're standing face to face. With the Savior. It's over. When you're standing in glory.

And you're looking at the Savior. Face to face. Then he can say. Well done. Good and faithful servant. Because job over. Right. But until you're there. Job's not over. So the calling stays the same.

Though the circumstances. May change. And we need to walk forward. In faithful obedience. Just the same. This is why we need those prayers. Paul says. I need them. But he says.

You need them too. Because he says. Your heart can be encouraged. I'm sending you. Tychicus. Our beloved brother. So that he may encourage your heart. Here's the wonderful aspect.

[36 : 50] Of being prayerfully sustained. And connected to others. Not only. Are we joining. In the midst of their battle. We are also allowing the Lord. To encourage our hearts. We are being renewed.

And encouraged. Each and every day. As we walk in fellowship. With them. Oh. What a sweet time it is. May God help us. To be fully equipped saints. May we realize.

That he's provided. All the strength. And all the might. That we will ever need. May we know who it is. We fighting against. And may we be action. Be very proactive. In how we take up our armor. And we put it on.

But once we have put it on. And we have resisted. May we be praying saints. On behalf of others. Would you pray with me. Lord I thank you so much. For this day. God I thank you.

For your word. I know your word. Challenges us. And it calls us. But Lord it also empowers us. So Lord we come to you. Right now. In the midst of our varying circumstances.

[37 : 49] Realizing that you are. An all sufficient savior. There's one here today. Who doesn't know you. Lord I pray that they would. Come to know you. Lord for those of us. That do know you.

As our Lord and savior. I pray that we would. Walk in a greater fellowship. With you than we ever have. I pray that we would. Redeem the time. I pray that we would. Know the truths. Of scripture. But Lord that we would. Apply them as well. Lord we just ask. That you be glorified. In what it is that we do. And may it be. For your honor. And yours alone. And we ask it all. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[39 : 48] Thank you.