

THE ARMOUR OF GOD - PART VII Praying in the Spirit

Text: Ephesians 6:18

Key Word: Prayer

Key Thought: There Are Important Ways to Pray During this Time of History

The final message of Paul to the Church in the topic of The Armour of God is that there is something else we must consider in reference with the six pieces of armour.

The old hymn writer George Duffield captured the truth when he wrote,

"Put on the gospel armour
Each piece put on with prayer
Where duty calls, or danger,
Be never wanting there.

Christians sometimes make the mistake of believing that once we put on the gospel armour that it will in and of itself protect us, almost mechanically. But we must understand that no piece of armour can be used effectively unless we are in fellowship and communion with God is prayer. **A Christian's prayer is essential in spiritual warfare.**

To get a deeper understanding of this truth lets turn to a time when Jesus taught this lesson in Luke 21:34-38; 22:31,32. The greatest commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself.

Just prior to our Lord's arrest, He went into the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. This was His prayer closet. Before entering into a time of intense prayer, Jesus gave vivid details about what to expect at the end of the age. He cautioned them not to become overtaken with excessive pleasures, drunkenness and the anxieties of life (Luke 21:34). Jesus made it clear that the difficulties of the day will be widespread.

*"For it will come upon all those who live on the
face of the whole earth."*

Luke 21:35

Our newspapers and t.v. broadcasts make it very clear that this is true today. It is very easy to become disheartened. We cannot change the future but we can prepare for it. Effectual, fervent prayer can make a big difference.

What Kind of Prayer Is Necessary in These Last Days?

I. PRAY AND WATCH FOR ESCAPE (Luke 21:36)

II. PRAY THAT YOUR FAITH WILL NOT FAIL (Luke 22:32)

III. PRAY THAT YOU DON'T FALL INTO TEMPTATION (Luke 22:40)

I. PRAY AND WATCH FOR ESCAPE (Luke 21:36)

Many wars are lost simply because of inattention. Nations have been known to let their guard down. They have failed to keep a watch over their city. Even worse, they have not had God involved in their protection (Psalm 127:1b).

Today we place our trust in highly technical and sophisticated early warning systems to help us prepare in the event of an attack. Canada has some of the most up-to-date technology in radar systems that they presently export to the nations of the world. As great as it is, it still falls short of God's early warning systems.

******* During the time of Elisha the prophet, the king of Aram set out with his army to ATTACK Israel.

God unveiled the scheme to Elisha who warned the king of Israel. This continued time and time again. It so enraged the king that he gathered his army officers together to find out which of them had betrayed his trust. It was quickly discovered that this was a work of God exposing the secrets of the king of Aram. *******

Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray that they may escape the clutches of their enemy. There is a heavy attack against Christian leadership in order to destroy the church. This persecution is also filtering down to the entire church. People are being persecuted, tormented, and maligned. The time to pray is now. A praying church can be kept from the clutches of the enemy.

I. PRAY AND WATCH FOR ESCAPE (Luke 21:36)

*** One day an ordinary country girl named Bolette Hinderli had a vision of a prisoner in his cell. She saw his face as well as his whole form.

A voice from heaven said, *"This man will share the same fate as other criminals if no one takes up the work of praying for him. Pray for him, and I will send him out to proclaim my praises among the heathen."*

She was obedient to her heavenly vision. She prayed, and struggled and fought in deep prayer although she never knew him. She then waited to hear of an ex-convict who had become converted and was called to missionary work.

During a visit in Scavenger, Norway, she heard that such a man would be preaching that evening in the city. When Lar Olsen Skrefsrud stepped forward to speak, she recognized him as the one she had seen in her heavenly vision. ***

II. PRAY THAT YOUR FAITH WILL NOT FAIL (Luke 22:32)

At the end of the Passover meal, the disciples entered into a foolish argument about who was the greatest among them. Perhaps they were already choosing who would replace Jesus.

Satan has continued to use fame to bring destruction to many a life. There have been many Janis Joplins, Jimmy Hendricks', Mohamad Alis', Hitlers', Nebuchadnezzars', & Kurt Cobains'. Satan continues to sift them like wheat.

Satan asked Jesus to surrender Peter so he could destroy his faith. Jesus prayed that his faith would not fail. Here Satan's power (which is limited by him asking for permission) stands against Jesus' prayer of intercession.

Peter denied His Lord but never fell away from God. Peter's moment of intense grief for his own sin showed the power of Christ's intercession that Peter's faith would stand. It was Peter who later wrote in the first chapter of his second epistle some very important opening words.

Read II Peter 1:3-11

Peter didn't want the early church to be deceived and lose their faith. He knew the power of having the Lord intercede for him. Later in his life he wrote,

II. PRAY THAT YOUR FAITH WILL NOT FAIL (Luke 22:32) (Contd.)

"the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials."

II Peter 2:9

It takes both prayer and faith to often see God meet our needs.

*** When Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary, first went to China it was in a ship. At one part in his journey the wind died down and the ship began to drift toward an island. The island was known for its inhabitants-cannibals who were eagerly anticipating a feast.

The captain came to Mr. Taylor and asked that he pray for God's help.

"I will" said Taylor, "provided you set your sails to catch the breeze."

The captain declined because he feared becoming the laughing stock of everyone on board. Taylor said, *"I will not undertake to pray for this vessel unless you prepare to sail!"*

The sails were hoisted into place. As soon as Hudson Taylor was in intense prayer a knock was heard at his stateroom.

"Who is there?" Taylor asked.

The captain responded and asked, *"Are you still praying for the wind?"*

"Yes!" was Taylor's reply.

"Well," said the captain, *"you'd better stop for have more wind than we can manage."* ***

A person of prayer is someone who will develop a faith that will not be easily swayed in times of great testing. Peter's faith was strengthened because Jesus prayed for him. Peter stumbled but did not fall. He in turn helped others.

"And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Luke 22:32

III. PRAY THAT YOU DON'T FALL INTO TEMPTATION (Luke 22:40)

On this same day of Unleavened Bread when the Passover Lamb had been sacrificed, Jesus went to His place of prayer. Shortly after arriving He said to His disciples,

"Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

Luke 22:40

The word *"tempt"* according to Webster's New Riverside Dictionary means *"to draw into a wrong or foolish course of action."*

In the midst of Jesus' temptation He withdrew to Gethsemane to enter a time of intense prayer. It was the only time that Jesus prayed three times for one thing. An angel had to appear to Him to strengthen Him. His prayer entered a level that few of us will ever reach. Doctor's call it hematomidrosis. It's a time when the sweat and blood will mingle under severe times of stress and strain.

It was under these conditions that Jesus knew He had to pray or else He may have acted in a way contrary to the will of His Father in heaven. Not only did Jesus pray, He also challenged His disciples to pray likewise. But they were exhausted physically, mentally and emotionally. They had given beyond the call of duty. They had recently been told that one of them would betray Jesus while another would deny Him. This heavy strain caused them to become weak and tired.

Jesus encouraged them to pray but all they could do was sleep. Since they didn't pray, their actions became foolish. They tried to overcome the crowd of chief priests, officers and temple guards with their own strength. Prayer would have kept them from surrendering to that temptation. If he would have been in a place of prayer, he would have responded differently. He would have accepted the arrest as the will of God not as a defeat at the hands of His enemies.

** A 3-year-old had to find a quick answer as she was caught in the kitchen standing on a chair eating cookies.

She said to her mother, *"I just climbed up to smell them, and my tooth got caught in one of them."* **

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Isn't it true that,

"Most people can resist everything but temptation."

III. PRAY THAT YOU DON'T FALL INTO TEMPTATION (Luke 22:40)(Contd.)

It also seems true that,

"Opportunity has to knock, but it is enough for temptation to stand outside and whistle."

The apostle Paul recognized that prayer was essential in spiritual warfare. Jesus was able to stand against the temptation in the garden by being in the place of prayer. He allowed His Father's will to control His actions (Luke 22:41,42). Jesus was in the fight of His life, He couldn't lose out.

Keep your spiritual armour in good use and don't forget to place each piece on in an attitude of prayer.

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Date: Apr 23/17

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus - Bb

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