



Spiritual Warfare - March 29, 2020

OPEN

During the current COVID-19 restrictions on personal interaction, what is one way of connecting that is meaningful for you?

Perhaps the most profound point of connection that we can share at a time like this is prayer. As you draw close to God, and as others do, we are really gathered together in Christ!

We have been studying the Lord's Prayer – today is our last lesson.

DIG

As we have examined Jesus' model prayer, we have been seeing that when He brings us into God's Kingdom He transforms us from living "upside down" to "right side up". This includes a transformation of our prayer patterns. Are your prayers being recalibrated by Jesus' model?

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| 1. <i>Why Pray</i> | <i>from duty to delight</i> |
| 2. <i>Adoration</i> | <i>from asking to adoring</i> |
| 3. <i>Petition</i> | <i>from desperate to dependent</i> |
| 4. <i>Intercession</i> | <i>from observing to interceding</i> |
| 5. <i>Unanswered Prayer</i> | |
| 6. <i>Contemplation</i> | <i>from outside to inside</i> |
| 7. <i>Listening</i> | <i>from talking to listening</i> |
| 8. <i>Confession</i> | <i>from consciousness to conscience</i> |

Today we are considering spiritual warfare, in which God moves us from a defensive posture, to an offensive one. This is what Richard Foster calls "authoritative prayer....there is also prayer that God uses to invade enemy territory and establish his kingdom." (*Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, HarperOne, 1992, 229) Let's look at two vital phases of spiritual warfare.

[A] Combat - active duty - Ephesians 6:10-20

What is it like to be on active duty in the military? What is it like hear the call to "stand to"? This requires preparation, readiness, being sharp and vigilant.

We have all seen the war movies, but we can only try to understand what it is like to brace for attack. John Piper said this: "We cannot know what prayer is for until we know that life is war." Whether we see it or not, if we are a follower of Jesus, we are at war with evil forces.

It seems appropriate that this final part of the Lord's Prayer be a plea for protection and victory. As we look to Ephesians 6, we discover that there are two strategies for spiritual combat.

a. *Escaping the attack - vv. 11-17*

One strategy for combating an enemy is protecting one's self from attack. In Matthew 6:13 we read, "And do not lead us into temptation, but *deliver* us from evil. This cry "deliver us" is significant! It is a plea to be rescued from testing (or temptation) by evil or the evil one. For this we have the defensive and stabilizing equipment in Ephesians 6:11-17a.

God does not tempt (James 1:13) but we do know that He tests and proves the reality and vitality of our faith. When an army is not under attack, they take the time to "dig in" and to create protective space. Against what are we "digging in" in the spiritual sense?

[John] Calvin lists two categories of temptation from the "right" and from the "left." From the right comes "riches, power, and honors," which tempt us into the sin of thinking we do not need God. From the left comes "poverty, disgrace, contempt, and affliction," which tempt us to despair, to lose all hope and to become angrily estranged from God. Both prosperity and adversity then are sore tests, and each one brings it's own set of enticements away from trusting God... (*Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, Timothy Keller, Penguin, 2014, 116-117)



In what ways do you feel under spiritual attack?

Because we are a significant, spiritual battle we must learn to cry out to God for *deliverance* from our enemy.

In his classic book, *The Screwtape Letters* (MacMillan, 1961, vii), C. S. Lewis presents the letters of a senior devil to a junior one. He wrote in the preface,

The commonest question is whether I really "believe in the Devil." Now, if by "the Devil" you mean a power opposite to God and, like God, self-existent from all eternity, the answer is certainly No. there is no uncreated being except God. God has no opposite. No being could attain a "perfect badness" opposite to the perfect goodness of God; for when you have taken away every kind of good thing (intelligence, will, memory, energy and existence itself) there would be none of him left.

Lewis goes on to explain what we know from the Bible, that fallen angels, led by Satan, are real and oppose God – but they are not His equal, in the negative!

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel and excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors. (3)



Which of category is harder for you? Trivializing or being traumatized?

a. Engaging the enemy - vv. 10, 17-20

We must look to God to help us move from defense to offence in our prayer life. What kind of praying is this? It is prayer that learns to wield our weapon, which is the Word of God (see verse 17). Further, it is prayer that is rooted in two powerful realities.

- We must **stand in the authority of Christ (vv. 10-11)** which is provided by His shed blood. Consider how the authority of Jesus is made available to us - see Ephesians 1:20-22 and 2:6.
- We must **act in the Kingdom realm (v. 18)** which means praying “in the Spirit” (in harmony or partnership). This links us to God’s activity. “Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth.” (Dr. Ole Hallesby in **Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home**, Richard Foster, HarperOne, 1992, **238-239**)

We must be careful in spiritual combat! Compassion, discernment, and self-discipline are very much required. Against what or who are waging war!? Ephesians 6:12 does not tell us that our battle is with lost people!

Of course, our society is “not Christian anymore” – which is the title of a special report in **Faith Today**, January-February, 2020, 28-31. But Ephesians 2:2-3 tells us that every believer has been rescued from a sinful state by the grace of God – from “*following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.*” Our enemy is three-fold:

- The world - the sin-soaked worldly system which has people in its grip
- The flesh - fill in the blank! self-righteousness self-centeredness
- The devil - he is the accuser and the deceiver (Rev 12:10; 20:10).

[B] Communion - rest and reflection - I Corinthians 11:17-34

After a time of intense combat, even the most battle-hardened soldiers require rest. Perhaps you have seen pictures of soldiers, about to go to the front line of the battle, gathered together for a service of communion.

Christians need communion not just to commemorate salvation, but to rest from the battle! In this passage we see “come together” four times (vv. 17-18; 33-34). The very essence of the Eucharist is about “gathering” – the term Paul used referred to an assembly, as in people gathering in a home.

Tragically, the Corinthians had corrupted the communion gathering through selfishness – some were going without food while some got drunk!

In our minds a “gathering” is defined as “an assembly or meeting, especially a social or festive one or one held for a specific purpose.” In these unsettling times here is a *huge thought*. Even when followers of Jesus are not together in the same physical location, we are “gathered” together as the Body of Christ...across time and space...wow! We might be struggling right now to figure out how to be a **local church**, but nothing – not even COVID-19 – can alter the fact that we are part of the **universal church**.

Think of it...wherever and whenever you are viewing this video, you have the opportunity to share communion with the entire Body of Christ!

I’ve been very touched recently by Don Moen’s song, “Our Father” in which he sings: “Hear our prayer, we are your children, and we’ve gathered here to today, we’ve gathered here to pray...”

With this truth in mind, here we are “**gathered together**” in prayer, confession, and trust in God, our Heavenly Father! We are here to worship Jesus who gave His life for our salvation.

- Welcome and warning - vv. 26-28
- The Bread - vv. 23-24
- The Cup - v. 25

REFLECT

Listen to a powerful expression of Christ’s prayer by Selah titled “[Deliver Us](#)”.

You are invited to listen to session eight of [The Prayer Course](#)

Look at the following resource from **Living Free In Christ**, by Neil Anderson (Regal, 1993, 278). Read slowly and reflect on your position in Christ, if you are a follower of Jesus.

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

I Am Accepted in Christ

JOHN 1:12	I am God's child
JOHN 15:15	I am Christ's friend
ROMANS 5:1	I have been justified
I CORINTHIANS 6:17	I am united with the Lord and one with Him in Spirit
I CORINTHIANS 6:20	I have been bought with a price, I belong to God
I CORINTHIANS 12:27	I am a member of Christ's Body
EPHESIANS 1:1	I am a saint
EPHESIANS 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child
EPHESIANS 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit
COLOSSIANS 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
COLOSSIANS 2:10	I am complete in Christ

I Am Secure in Christ

ROMANS 8:1 & 2	I am free forever from condemnation
ROMANS 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good
ROMANS 8:33 & 34	I am free from any condemning charges against me
ROMANS 8:35	I cannot be separated from the Love of God
II CORINTHIANS 1:21	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God
COLOSSIANS 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God
PHILIPPIANS 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected
PHILIPPIANS 3:20	I am a citizen of Heaven
II TIMOTHY 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind
HEBREWS 4:16	I can find Grace and Mercy in time of need
I JOHN 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me

I Am Significant in Christ

MATTHEW 5:13 & 14	I am the salt and light of the earth
JOHN 15: 1 & 5	I am a branch of the True Vine, a channel of His life
JOHN 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit
ACTS 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ's
I CORINTHIANS 3:16	I am God's Temple
II CORINTHIANS 5:17-20	I am a minister of reconciliation
II CORINTHIANS 6:1	I am God's co-worker
EPHESIANS 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm
EPHESIANS 2:10	I am God's workmanship
EPHESIANS 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence
PHILIPPIANS 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me