

## **Closing Request and Blessing**

*Ephesians 6:18-24*

*May 1-2, 2010*

- Sermon's theme = The Church, the Body of Christ, is to be lead and used by the Spirit in care and ministry to one another.

### Introduction

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- Open Bible to Ephesians 6
- Spiritual Warfare – Command, Conflict, Armor
- Famous Last Lines
  - ✓ "What is this sin, my children?" – Sound of Music (1965)
  - ✓ "Good. For a moment there, I thought we were in trouble." – Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)
  - ✓ "But Charlie, don't forget what happened to the man that suddenly got everything he always wanted." "What happened?" "He lived happily ever after." – Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (1971)
  - ✓ "Oh, but anyway, Toto, we're home! Home! And this is my room - and you're all here! And I'm not gonna leave here ever, ever again because I love you all! - And oh, Auntie Em, there's no place like home." – Wizard of Oz (1939)
  - ✓ "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." – Casablanca (1942)
  - ✓ "Wilbur never forgot Charlotte. Although he loved her children and grandchildren dearly, none of the new spiders quite took her place in his heart. She was in a class by herself. It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both." – Charlotte's Web (1973)

### Exegesis

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- **Closing Request – Prayer**
  - Ephesians 6:18-20
  - 18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

- 19 *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,*
- 20 *for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*
- “*And pray...*” = Present participle; KJV “Praying”; This is the on-going action to accompany the putting on and receiving of the armor of God
  - Cp. Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:12-21 = Other two teachings of prayer in the book

➤ How: in the Spirit

- “*...in the Spirit...*” = This is by the Spirit and under the Spirit’s control – the same as praying in God’s will
- Cp. Romans 8:26-27, “*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*”
- To pray in the Spirit requires that the Spirit is in us (salvation) and that we have developed a relationship with Him
- To pray in the Spirit is not to use the Spirit to pray but for the Spirit to use us to pray

➤ When: on all occasions

- “*...on all occasions...*” = Literally, “in every time”
- Our prayer lives match the time frame of our Spiritual warfare – every time or every moment of the day
- Illustration: Siren prayers, Chinese food prayers, Dr. Pepper prayers

➤ What: all kinds of prayers and requests

- “*...with all kinds of prayers and requests...*” = Literally, “through every prayer and pleading”
- Paul uses the regular word for prayer and the word for urgency in prayer – pray regularly and urgently (not one or the other)

- Prayer is needed regularly (prayer chapel, prayer sheet, missions brochure, Wednesday Night Worship, Mountain Movers, Northside for the Fridge) and urgently (Haiti, China, 9/11)
- Who: all the saints, me [Paul]
  - “...*for all the saints.*” = All believers; Cp. 1:1
  - Every believer is part of this spiritual warfare and in need of prayer
  - “...*also for me...*” = I don’t believe Paul is asking for prayer for himself as an exception but rather as an inclusion
  - Even though he is a spiritual leader to them, he is still in need of prayer
- Why: words may be given me
  - “...*that when I open my mouth...*” = Literally, “in the opening of my mouth”; This isn’t a special time but every time that there is an opening in my mouth (whenever I open my mouth)
  - “...*words may be given me...*” = Paul asks them to pray so that when He speaks, the words would be given to him (that is, come from the Holy Spirit)
  - Cp. Acts 2:4, “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*”
  - Cp. Matthew 10:19-20, “*But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*”
- Why: make known the mystery of the gospel
  - “...*that I will fearlessly make known...*” = Plainly and openly share something
  - “...*the mystery...*” = Cp. 1:9-10; 3:3-9; 5:32
  - The mystery is that it, the Church in unity of all peoples through Christ, was not known or perceived before this time
  - “...*of the gospel...*” = The subject and main reason for the opening of our mouths – to share the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ
  - Pray that God would give the words and that the Gospel would be plainly shared through our words

- Why: declare it fearlessly
  - “...*that I may declare it fearlessly...*” = Again, from the root for plainly and openly as well as courageously
  - We need to pray that our words would be God’s word, that it would be a sharing of the gospel and that it would be done openly and courageously
  - Now consider if this is the focus of our prayers for other believers – do we pray that the gospel will be shared courageously through their lives or that their situations will change?
  - “...*as I should.*” = Literally, “as it is necessary for me to proclaim”
  - Remember we are in a spiritual conflict and the gospel is the power to reach those still lost or losing in the conflict
  
- ❖ **We are called to pray for other believers at all times so that the Spirit can share the Gospel with those in this conflict**

- **Closing Blessing**

- Ephesians 6:21-24

21 *Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord...*

- God’s Servant: Tychicus

- “*Tychicus...*” = Acts 20:4; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12
- “...*the dear brother...*” = Tychicus was a ministry partner with Paul but was also a brother in Christ to all those in Ephesus
- “...*faithful servant...*” = He is described as a faithful servant – deacon; servant is the most common way of translating the word in the New Testament
- He was a believer that allowed God to use him in ways of service and ministry so that the work of the Church could go on
- Paul is sending Tychicus to them as God’s blessing to them

21 *...will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing.*

22 *I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.*

- God’s Encouragement: Paul’s ministry

- “...*may know how I am and what I am doing.*” / “...*that you may know how we are...*” = Tychicus will bring them a report of Paul’s ministry (remember he is in jail)
- “...*that he may encourage you.*” = Paul sees the report of his ministry as God’s blessing to them to encourage them in their part of the ministry (if Paul can continue while in jail, imagine what they can do out of jail)

23 *Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

24 *Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.*

➤ God’s Gifts: Peace, Love and Grace

- “*Peace...*” = Cp. 1:2; Hebrew blessing; harmony and tranquility – Salvation and Christian unity
- “...*love with faith...*” = Enjoy the love of God that comes to you through faith
- “*Grace...*” = Cp. 1:2; Greek blessing; God’s working on your behalf

❖ **Recognize God’s bountiful blessings all around you and minister to others as His blessing**

## Response

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- **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to grow in the discipline of prayer and ministry to others as God’s blessing to and through us.**
  - Observers = Accept God’s peace and love
  - Disciples = Pray for one another and be God’s blessing to others