

December 2015

From the Pastor

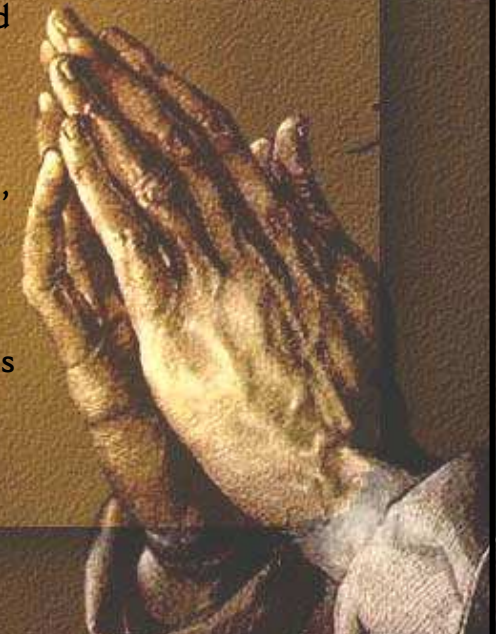


Amen!

Most of my musings for this year have been about the Armor of God. This is the last installment of this series. Before I get to my musings, let me remind you of the passage that speaks of God's armor. I am adding two verses (Ephesians 6:19-20) that I did share back when I started this series.

Ephesians 6:13-20 ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor 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. (ESV)

The last three verses speak of prayer. I find these verses to be loaded with instructions on prayer. I observe six things we can all take to heart in our prayer lives.



The first observation is we are to pray at all times. We need to live a life in constant communication with God. My wife Mindy and I don't talk to each other every moment we are together, but we are still communicating. We do so by looking at each other, smiling at each other, etcetera; loads of non-verbal communication. Praying at all times is staying in touch with God.

Praying in the Spirit has been defined in a number of ways. I think the way we are to understand this is that we are to dwell in the Spirit. I think of the phrase being baptized in the Spirit. The thought I have is being soaked in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit is having a deep relationship with God that is a part of your prayer life.

We are to pray with all prayer and supplication. By using these two words Paul is saying prayer is important. The two words are synonyms that are used together to bring emphasis to the word "prayer." Prayer is vital. That is why both of these words appear, because we are to realize prayer is essential.

We are also to keep alert. In other words, we are not to relax when it comes to prayer. We are to keep watch in our lives, because we are under attack by Satan. We need to keep our dependence on God.

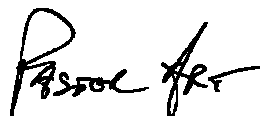
We are to pray with all perseverance. In other words, we are to not stop praying. I have faced issues in my life that have never been resolved, and God is calling me to continue to pray about them. For example, I have family members who are still not saved. We are to continually, with patience, pray to God until either the issue is settled or we are face to face with God.

We are also to pray for all the saints. When I heard of the terrible acts of violence in Paris, my first response was to pray for the Christians in Paris. I prayed God would give them the ability to minister to those around them. We are called to pray for each other in the family of God.

And finally, Paul asks Christians in Ephesus, "Pray for me to speak the gospel boldly." What I get from this is that we are to ask for prayer. We are to realize our need for God in every part of our lives, and we are to be willing to ask others to pray for us.

As we finish our look at the Armor of God, let us pray for each other that we remember we are in a battle, and we need God's protection for that battle.

In Him and for His glory,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pastor Joe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.