

The Soldier's Prayer – Part 3

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AM Service

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Text:

[Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

Introduction

One of the greatest privileges that God has given us as His children is prayer. Prayer is both a responsibility and a privilege. It is both a duty and a delight. It is both a discipline and a disposition. It is both an act and an attitude. As we saw last Sunday, prayer is an outcome of our sense of reliance. It is the result of a disposition of dependence. In order to pray consistently and constantly we must have a deep sense of utter dependence upon God. In order to pray always with all prayer and supplication we must pray for a deeper awareness of our dependence upon God.

We cannot fight the powers of darkness with man-made weapons, nor with philosophy, nor human knowledge and wisdom. We must fight the spiritual battle on our knees constantly praying. To fight sin and Satan without prayer is like David fighting Goliath in King Saul's armour. The armour doesn't fit, and is ineffective. Like a car engine without gasoline, the armour is useless unless we pray.

This morning consider with me the third quality of a good soldier's prayer.

[Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;](#)

Not only must our prayers be consistent and comprehensive, it must also be Spirit-filled prayers. There is a great need to pray in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit is mentioned three times in Scripture.

[1 Corinthians 14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.](#)

[Jude 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost,**](#)

Then our text:

[Ephesians 6:18 **Praying** always with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit,** and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;](#)

A good soldier's prayer is a prayer in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit is the only true and acceptable prayer. But what does it mean to "pray in the Spirit"?

I - The Nature of Praying in the Spirit

First, we must clarify what “praying in the Spirit” is not.

1. What it is not

a) Praying in the Spirit is not “praying in tongues”

Praying in the Spirit does not mean going into a trance or speaking gibberish which cannot be discerned. Actually, genuine speaking or praying in tongues is to speak or pray in a discernible foreign language, not to speak or pray in nonsense syllables. Paul is talking about making definite petitions to God, not praying in an unknown tongue.

The Holy Spirit does not overpower our mental faculties. He directs, but He does not dominate. He never acts so as the person praying is out of control.

[1 Corinthians 14:40](#) Let all things be done decently and in order.

b) Praying in the Spirit is not praying emotionally

There are times when we are deeply affected emotionally when we pray, but this is not what Paul is referring to in the phrase “praying in the Spirit.” There is nothing wrong when our emotions are involved in prayers as we sense our desperate need, but this is not what Paul means by “praying in the Spirit.” It is possible to pray emotionally in the Holy Spirit or to pray calmly in the Spirit. It is also possible to pray emotionally in the flesh, getting all worked up for reasons far removed from the Holy Spirit.

So, what does it mean to pray in the Spirit?

2. What it is

a) It is to pray by the power of the Spirit

[Romans 8:26](#) Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

When we pray in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God is **enabling us to pray**. It is the Spirit who **motivates** and **energizes** our prayer. “Praying in the Holy Spirit” means praying with the **help** and **influence** of the Holy Spirit.

b) It is to pray under the guidance of the Spirit

Our prayer should not only be empowered and energized by the Spirit, it also should be **directed** and **guided** by the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to pray and it also the Holy Spirit that directs us in our prayers.

George Lawrence Lawlor put it this way ...

So, praying in the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but is “praying out of hearts and souls that are indwelt, illuminated, and filled with the Holy Spirit.”

This is the only way we can truly pray, it is by the Spirit of God empowering us and guiding us.

Zehariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **the spirit of grace and of supplications**: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

He is called the "Spirit of supplications" because it is He who **awakens us to the desire** and need to pray. Oh, how dependent we are upon the varied ministry of God's Spirit. Oh, how thankful we should be, because God **not only invites us to pray, He also enables us to pray.**

II – The Need of Praying in the Spirit

All prayer should be “in the Spirit.” It is the way all prayer is to be offered. **Without the Holy Spirit our prayers are as lifeless.** It is like **a body without a soul**, as ineffective as **an arrow without a bow.**

There are reasons why we need to pray in the Spirit. There are reasons why we need the Holy Spirit’s enabling and leading ministry in our prayers.

1. Because of Our Inability

One reason why we need the Spirit of God as we pray is because of our inability. Left to ourselves we are unable to pray. We are weak, and that is a problem that we need the Holy Spirit’s help.

Remember how Peter, James, and John fell asleep there in the garden when Jesus said in ...

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

They did not have the physical power, the physical stamina, the mental alertness and concentration. There was not enough physical, spiritual, emotional strength to concentrate in prayer. They were just weak.

Have you ever tried to pray when you are tired and weary? Have you ever tried to pray when you get sleepy? You know you need to pray but you don't have the strength to keep you alert and awake to be able to pray. Your spirit is willing, but your flesh is weak.

But here is where the Holy Spirit helps us with.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

In times when our bodies are tired and weak, that we cannot focus and concentrate in our prayers, in those times **we need to cast ourselves upon the Holy Spirit.** We must be filled with the Spirit of God because when we are filled with **the Holy Spirit it gives us energy and power** and it **helps us focus and concentrate.** There is something about being filled with the Holy Spirit that gives us power to pray, to overcome our impotence.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

2. Because of Our Ignorance

The second reason why we need the Holy Spirit as we pray is because of our ignorance. We just simply do not know. Left to ourselves we do not know how to pray and what to pray for.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for **we know not what we should pray for as we ought**: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We are told in this verse that we have an infirmity which arises from our ignorance. We do not know. Have you ever been to place of prayer where no words come out because you do not know what is God's will for that particular situation?

Many times in the church's prayer meeting, a brother or a sister in Christ will request to pray for something. So you start to pray, but no words would come out of your mouth because you don't know what to pray for. You just don't know what is best for that situation.

Here is an old Chinese story to illustrate:

A Chinese gentleman lived on the border of China and Mongolia. In those days, there was constant conflict and strife along the perimeter. The man had a beautiful horse. One day, the horse leaped over the corral, raced down the road, crossed the border, and was captured by the Mongolians. His friends came to comfort him. "That's bad news," they said sadly. "What makes you think it's bad news?" asked the Chinese gentleman. "Maybe it's good news." A few days later the horse came bolting into his corral, bringing with it a massive stallion. His friends crowded around. "That's good news!" they cried. "What makes you think it's good news?" he asked. "Maybe it's bad news." Later, his son, while riding the stallion and trying to break it, was thrown off and broke his leg. "That's bad news," cried the friends. "What makes you think it's bad news?" asked the Chinese gentleman. "Maybe it's good news." One week later, war broke out with Mongolia, and a Chinese general came through, drafting all the young men. All later perished, except for the young man who could not go because his leg was broken. The man said to his friends, "You see, the things you thought were bad turned out good; and the things you thought were good turned out bad."

Our infirmity, our weakness is that we do not and cannot know the future. We cannot know the final outcome of an action or an event. **We do not know if the things we want will really be good for us, or bad.** We do not know what is best for us. But God does. He knows the end from the beginning, and **He knows how all things will turn out, and He knows what is best for us.**

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for **we know not what we should pray for as we ought**: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

This verse tells us that the Spirit intercedes for us, the Spirit prays for us. As the Holy Spirit prays for us, God answers His prayers, therefore all the things turn out for our good in the unfolding providence of the Lord.

This is why we need guidance, the guidance of the only Person who always and at all times prays "according to the will of God." **The Holy Spirit helps us in our praying by giving to us the right desire and direction.**

Even our prayers must be guided by the Spirit of God, "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought".

3. Because of Our Insensitivity

Left to ourselves our prayer will be selfish. If we are not careful our prayers could easily be filled with self. And if we our praying is selfish, our praying is out of the will of God and our prayers will not be answered.

James 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2: Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. 4: Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

If we are not praying in the Spirit, we must be praying in the flesh. But those who pray in the Spirit, prays according to the will of God; therefore, they get answers to their prayers and they know the blessings of victory over the foe. Praying in the Spirit glorifies God, and where God is glorified victory is assured.

III - The Nurturing of Praying in the Spirit

How do we cultivate or develop a Spirit-empowered and Spirit-led prayer? The answer is, we must be filled with the Spirit of God; and to be filled with the Spirit, we must be filled with the Word of God. The Word of God and the Spirit are all closely linked together.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:** 18: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Right here is where God's call to be in the Word every day and His call to pray at all times in the Spirit become intertwined.

If you are to pray in the Spirit, you must live in the Word of God, read, study, memorize, and meditate on it day and night. This is how to be filled with the Spirit and there is no other way.

Practical Admonitions

To the Unbelievers

If we are to pray a true and acceptable prayer we need the help of the Spirit, but no one can enlist the help of the Spirit in prayer if he does not have the Spirit indwelling him.

Romans 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

To be indwelt by the Spirit, one must be born of the Spirit and of the water. So, the question is, have you been born again? Have you been born of the water and of the Spirit?

Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

To the Believers

In all of our praying, we need the Holy Spirit's help, therefore we must be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit. How do we grieve the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

We grieve Him through lying, anger, stealing, dirty and useless conversation, malice, unkindness. These sins are repulsive to His holy nature and thus grieve and offend Him.

And if we have offended Him and our sins remain unconfessed and unforgiven, we cut ourselves off from the Spirit's help. We cannot pray in the Spirit if we have unconfessed sin in our life.

Psalm 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

I cannot come before God's holy throne in the power of His Holy Spirit, while at the same time holding on to sin in my life,

But it does not have to be that way. David confessed his sins and did not hold on to his sins and as a result he experienced the blessing of answered prayer.

Psalm 66:19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. 20: Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

AMEN!