

Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

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I. Introduction

Why is God so adamant that we speak with Him...all the time? Though we've been eternally saved and possess protective armor, it's useless unless we use it. Unless we remember who we are, what we have, and what is at our disposal, Satan will have his way with us. This is why God wants us to be in constant contact with Him. The more time children spend with their parents, the more they behave like them. So it is with God; the more we're around Him, the more we will think and react like Him.

II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

Chapter 6

The Lord has told us in detail who we are and what's at stake. We used to run with the Devil, 2:2, but now we are part of Him, 1:6; 2:5-6. There's a battle raging between God and Satan and we're in the middle of it. The Lord's already won this battle and one day He will return to establish and rule His Kingdom and we'll rule alongside Him, 1:11, 19-23. In the meantime, we must realize that the battle is on. We're always under attack and the enemy's attacks are cunning and very deceptive, at times we won't even realize that we've been hit and taken captive to do Satan's will. This is why the Lord urges us to put on His armor so that we'll be able to stand strong and withstand the enemy's attacks. He finishes His instructions with an urgent plea for us to pray constantly. Why?

6:18, why is prayer necessary if we've got the armor? In fact, hasn't Jesus won this battle already, so why is prayer necessary? This passage is interesting because on the one hand, we're already wearing the armor and yet He's urging us to put it on. How can both be true?

First, we already possess and are wearing this armor:

Truth: it was the Truth that sealed us to Jesus, 1:13, Jesus taught us the Truth, 4:21, and we produce Truth because it's one of the Spirit's fruits, 5:9.

Righteousness: we're wearing righteousness because we're wearing the New Man who was created in true righteousness, 4:24, and we'll produce righteousness if we walk by the Spirit since it's one of His fruits, 5:9.

Gospel: it was the Gospel that saved us, 1:13, and it's the Gospel that makes us part of Christ and able to partake of His rulership and inheritance, 3:6.

Faith: it is faith that saved us, 1:15; 2:8, faith gives us access to God the Father and His power, 3:12, and keeps Christ dwelling in our hearts, 3:17.

Salvation: the moment we believed in Jesus, we were saved, thus, we already possess salvation, 1:13; 2:5-6, 8.

Word of God: it was God's Word of truth that saved us and what Jesus has taught us, 1:13; 4:21, and it is by means of God's Word that Jesus redeems and refines us, 5:26.

Second, that fact that we already possess and are wearing this armor, the fact that we're already in Christ is precisely the reason why God wants us to stay in constant communication with Him. Notice, He tells us to always pray "in the Spirit." Our constant go-to position when it comes to thinking about anything and everything is to think with Him in mind. If we wonder what something means, if we don't know what to do, whatever the issue, we're supposed to run it by Him first. This is especially crucial when we're in battle with Satan, which is always! We're not supposed to think with our human minds, but with His (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

This is why prayer is so important, so urgent, why God tells us to pray ALWAYS and with absolute vigilance and intense persistence. Think about it, what is prayer at its core? It's stopping life so we can focus solely on the Lord and get His advice on matters. What do Jesus and God want with us? For us to be like them, 4:13; 5:1-2. How do children become like their parents? They're in constant contact and communication with them; they mimic them because that's what they see 24/7. That's what God wants; He wants us to be in constant contact and communication so that we will be just like Him (Matthew 5:48). And notice too, that God wants not just us but our brothers and sisters to stay in constant contact and communication, which is why He asks us to pray for them.

6:19-20, what's amazing here is that the great apostle Paul asks for prayer. Why does this spiritual giant, who's traveled all over the ancient world, established churches, performed miracles, and survived the most difficult circumstances and suffering, why does he need prayer? Because he knows that the battle is always on, Satan is always on the attack and he's no different from you. He too can be taken captive by Satan's deceptive schemes, so he asks for prayer. What he asks for tells you why he's concerned: he asks for boldness twice. What?! How can this mighty apostle who stood up to kings, mobs, and Israel's leadership need boldness? Again, any one of us can fail and right now Paul is imprisoned in Rome waiting to see Caesar, Nero, the one who a few years later began persecuting Christians. This is a perfect opportunity for Satan to shift Paul's attention from boldness to fear and worry for his life and, therefore, to caution and silence concerning the Gospel. Did God grant Paul the boldness to preach the Gospel in spite of his circumstances? Yes! (Philippians 1:13; 4:22).

6:21-22, though Paul was imprisoned and people were making it more difficult for him while imprisoned (Philippians 1:16), he was concerned about the Ephesians. He knew that the Ephesians might be blaming themselves for his imprisonment, 3:13. So he sends Tychicus to ensure that they don't blame themselves but instead are encouraged and comforted.

6:23-24, God's desire is for the Ephesians (and us) to have His peace, love and faith. Satan's attacks are relentless so God wants us to have His peace in the midst of this war. He wants us to have His capacity to love, even those who hurt us, 4:32; 5:2. He wants us to have faith, to trust that He'll shield us from Satan's lying arrows designed to steal, kill and destroy, 6:16. And He wants His grace to be with all who love "our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." To love Him in sincerity is to obey Him and if we do, God the Father and the Son will reside in us (John 14:15-24). Their desire is to always be with us.

The command for pray always is a call to make it a habitual practice so that we don't need to stop to pray when trouble strikes. Instead, we're already armed and ready, Mark 9:14-29.

III. Conclusion

*Finally, my brethren, be strong **in the Lord** and in the power of **His might**.*