



We've been in this series on praying. I love what Mike Ward did and the Stewardship team did in terms of praying and giving and encouragement and help to us to pray.

In the Gospel we've been praying The Lord's Prayer and we're going to do that and we're going to break it up into pieces this morning to set up the final part of that prayer. Jesus gives that as a part of the foundation when storms hit that we'll be able to stand and not collapse and He gives it in Matthew 6, The Lord's Prayer, as we have been praying it, but later in Luke 11, the disciples see Jesus praying and they ask Him to teach them to pray. So He is given the content back in Matthew 6 and you know how things will fly over your head and it doesn't make any sense to you and then all of a sudden a life circumstance will come up and you will think, way a minute – I need to know how to do that.

Well in my marriage and as a pastor, I realized I had gone to church all my life. I had a praying mother and saw her pray and it didn't register on me. As teenagers we'd sit in the balcony and we'd count the number of pipes in the organ because the pastoral prayers were so long. I was not encouraged to pray and I knew I was suppose to and I had sort of a weak prayer life until in my marriage and in my role as a pastor I thought that I needed to go back and learn to pray. I said, **"Lord, teach me to pray."** I started asking my mother how she learned to pray and asking friends what they did when they prayed.

This foundation is a part of Jesus promising that if we will hear and practice what He says, that when the storms hit you will stand through them. Let's pray it out loud and let me separate it out, with me.

- "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name!"
- "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,"

Whoa, run that back, we do it so automatically. Let me remind you of the context that Jesus is speaking into. Israel is an occupied country by Rome. Roman garrisons, Roman centurions – there is a military force there. Caesar claims to be god and his kingdom is going to provide all your needs, so pay the taxes. Jesus is training in the middle of that context with the kingdom / government of Caesar to focus the kingdom, the governing of god and doing his will.

- "on earth as it is in heaven"

In our sphere of influence, the same way the angels of obeyed God in heaven. But He is teaching us to pray that in the context of an occupying military force. Then He instructs us to not ask Caesar to give us our daily bread, but ask the Heavenly Father, pray it with me....

- "Give us this day our daily bread"
- "And forgive us our debts"
- "as we forgive our debtors."

I loved Peter Barnes' message in terms of this, because at the end of the prayer He says for if you forgive others their debts, God will forgive you. If you do not forgive them, God will not forgive you. I use to think that was a harsh Word, but I love that Word because it puts a pressure on me that to receive God's forgiveness, I've got to be willing to give it away. I've got to be willing to forgive and I've found things in my life that so wounded me and so embittered me I couldn't just by decision release this – because that is what forgiveness means. I couldn't do it. It had a grip on me. But the pressure of that Word pressed upon me until the Father clipped it loose and forgiveness came.

The next part...

- “And lead us not into temptation”
- “but deliver us from evil.”

Do you notice something about this? This isn't an individual. He is training the community to pray. He is training to do this for us, because You are Our Father, not Caesar, it is Your Kingdom. We want to learn to do Your Will in this difficult circumstance. That is why we pray prayers together and we seek to be trained to pray.

The evil one. The original translation of The Lord's Prayer as we know it, is not deliver us from evil. I grew up praying with this wording. I had no concept of evil. I especially had not concept of the evil one. We say the Apostle's Creed, we don't say, and I believe in the evil one. We live in a country that characterizes evil. I can't remember who said it, but I remember the quote – I looked for it all week long – **“Satan has two strategies. One to convince you that he is more powerful than he actually is and the other is to convince you that he does not exist.”**

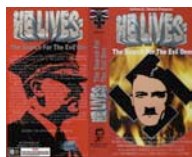
I started studying scripture and one of the things I love to do is word studies. I'll take a word, put it in my computer and it prints out all the references in scripture to a subject. I put in the word evil and started studying scripture and it begins way back in the Old Testament in Genesis and that original story about creation. If you will remember the serpent lies to Eve and she takes the fruit and it struck me that God never intended us to taste evil or to experience evil first hand – that was not a part of God's plan for us in His good creation. But, because we have and because some of us have experienced it in very direct ways that have poisoned and wounded us deeply. God has a plan for deliverance – it is following Jesus.

The scriptures in the Old Testament the deliverance is pictured by Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and pharaoh is an evil one – he has his grip on them. Remember that picture, because for God to deliver them from the grip of the evil pharaoh He had to apply enormous pressure and it didn't happen overnight – for him to finally release his grip that they could be delivered. The picture of salvation or deliverance is following the anointed Savior out and away from that evil one.

God plan in Jesus is to deliver us from Satan's grip, from evil's grip, heal its effect and to free us from the evil one and his schemes. Have you ever thought about the schemes of the devil? We're going to come back to that. But the evil one has schemes. God's plan begins, continues and moves toward God's conclusion as we pray.

Now, I don't know about you, but I grew up and I'm suppose to handle everything myself and I'm not suppose to need anyone and prayer is for weak people. I had to experience such brokenness and weakness that I began to realize, “Oh, thank you Father that You want to hear my heart and You want to heal my pain. I need to say how weak I am to you and to anybody else who wants to listen.” Jesus teaches us to bring to God in our prayers everything, including our encounters with evil and the evil one. Did you hear that? **Jesus wants to train us to bring all of our experience in life, even our experience with evil and the evil one into His presence to pray.**

We have an unclear definition, at least in America, of evil and the evil one. You know we think of these horrible



people in history sometimes who intentionally seek to kill, maim and destroy. Adolf Hitler for one who reeked havoc on millions of people and enjoyed it. Or we might think of a serial killer. Do you all recognize who this is? Some of you are old enough. Jeffrey Dahmer, remember him? Chicago, horrible serial killer. Looks innocent doesn't he, on trial.



Everything looks good. You wouldn't say from the appearance he is evil. Or do you recognize who this is? Teddy Bundy, serial killer, suave, pleasant looking, smiling when he is on trial who destroyed and killed girls on campuses. Or more recently we might think of Osama bin Laden. In other words, our definition of evil is somebody so clearly destructive and damaging and killing that we can't miss them and who enjoy destroying other people.





But America has modern caricatures of the evil one. Some of us grew up with that caricature of Satan, the red demon with horns and the tail, comes through history in literature. Now we have video games and movies that present him as so scary we think, good golly this is hopeless. Remember, one of the tactics or the schemes of Satan is to convince you that he is more powerful than he is, so we have all these horrible images that are planted in our culture. In scripture through history, people have depicted in famous pieces of art as a fallen angel.



In the last class of my graduate work it involved learning to pray the Psalms and Eugene Peterson was our professor and it was a group of forty people from all over the world – missionaries, pastors of big and little churches, every denomination, every country almost. It was a most exciting learning environment. One of the guys I got to know was a former marine officer and was a pastor of a charismatic church and he presented this bizarre picture of Satan and Eugene Peterson said, “You will never encounter that. That his Hollywood’s vision of evil. What you must learn to recognize is pastoral evil.” I perked up my ears and asked, “**What do you mean by pastoral evil?**”

Think about this. **People who appear noble and good, but who intentionally do the destructive, wounding, harming things. They hide and cover up their intentionally destructive, wounding and harmful actions.** They slowly poison your ability to trust anyone, even God Himself. For you sports fans, you’ve heard on the radio and television a very noble appearing person, a coach at Penn State University who founded a second chance foundation for underprivileged children and horribly abused some according to the allegations that have been brought against him. Noble, appears good; but underneath hidden, this horribly destructive behavior. God gives instructions. He does not hide the fact that we will encounter evil and some of us will even encounter the evil one.

I remember when I started, I’m such a skeptic, I would ask questions and I realized that I’m like Thomas in that I need the first hand experience with the Holy Spirit and He gave that to me. I realized that I had questions about Satan and the evil one and I thought, oh, my goodness, I know me, I’m going to need firsthand experience with this. I said, “Oops, Lord, let’s don’t go there. But through the years, first had experience.

I had a young person in ministry bring his wife to me. Basically his intent, he didn’t say it this way, “fix her.” As she began to share the poison in her heart, she had been horribly abused as a child by her dad and her brother. The abuse was so severe that it fractured her personality and she lost her family, she lost a marriage. The poison was so infectious that she cried out one time in my presence, “Where was God? How could He allow this to happen?” Five years ago she emailed me in Amarillo and said, “I wanted you to know that I’ve forgiven those and I’ve been set free from that abuse.” Like with pharaoh, it took time, enormous pressure, but she followed Jesus and he worked his plan in her heart to set her free and bring healing.

Read this with me. **This is Paul’s instructions in Ephesians on dealing with evil and the evil one.** He has laid a case for we’re to have such an experience of God’s grace and His love that it becomes the foundation of our lives and just begins to heal us and then he gives instructions in chapter 4 after laying this foundation for us in the community of faith and at the end he gives this instruction about putting off our old ways, the ways that our shaped by the poison we’ve experience in our lives and put on the new ways and then he concludes with this instructions, read it with me.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God....

Now, for the ancient reader they would automatically have an image. We live in America and so unless we’ve been in the military or around the military we might not think of armament – I’m glad that Kyle brought Jimmy in and showed at least we know about football armament – but he says to put on the full armament of God, not just one piece of it. Why do we want do that? Why does he tell us to do that? It looks cumbersome.

You might know the story of King David with the armor of Saul and he put it on and it was too heavy for him. He says this, read this...

...put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

That leaped out at me some years ago. I went in my files in preparation for this message and I found where I had written out from scriptures, twenty-two schemes of the evil one. I gave it to my wife and she worked it for me – I'm very wordy – but listen to this from Genesis 3: **One of the schemes is to come to you disguised as something or someone who is familiar, who feels safe and with whom you can converse freely.** Think about the coach at Penn State or others. I drew this as the serpent which they named. Remember they gave all the animals their names. They named the serpent. Or sometimes it is the mate or an angel of light.

The second scheme I wrote down is from Genesis 3: **To divide, separate, force and keep apart. I said, in other words, to divorce the woman away from the man in making decisions as one flesh.** She didn't say to wait a minute, let me go talk this over with my husband. She made a decision [Eve] that still affects you and me today. In other words, divide so that we are not subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. I need to stop there. I might get a little teary in sharing this.

I have been pleased by your elders who went through a grueling process that was thrust upon them and as Bill Laughlin, who is a former senior pastor like I am, observed, they didn't demonize one another, they didn't curse one another and they embraced one another and loved one another as Christ loved them, even when they didn't agree on the issues at hand. You are in good stead in terms of the leadership of this church. One of schemes of the evil one is to take good people and pit them against one another so they don't walk together, even when they disagree.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,

I remember some years ago, some of you are not old enough to know the stories of Brer Rabbit, Uncle Remus stories, but one of the ones – I was in a denominational squabble. One day it just hit me, it is like Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby – you swing and you get stuck and some of you know this in your marriage and you swing and you get stuck again and you get embroiled in this flesh and blood struggle to win and there are no winners. He goes on to say this, read it with me:

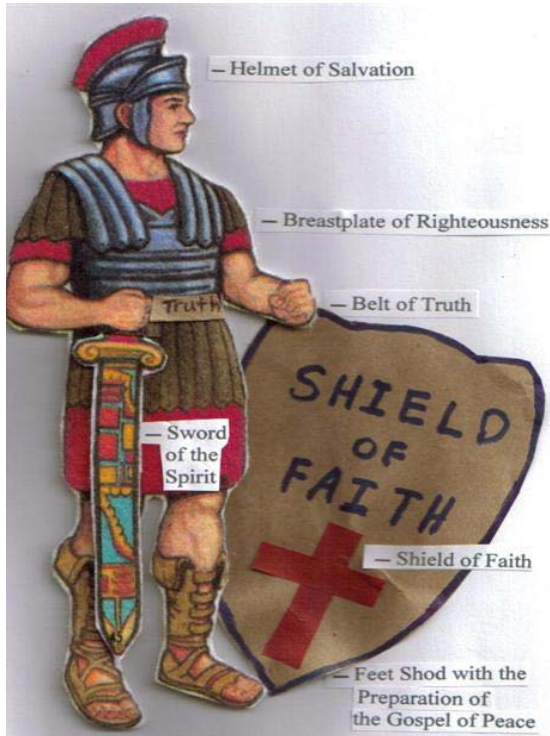
...but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Now how to you picture that? Visualize spiritual conflict in the heavenly realm. There are all sorts of caricatures of this process, but at least in the words, at least it is this. The devil's schemes involve authority figures who abuse and lie about it. You realize one of the tactics of Satan is to cover up the destruction. I've covered up so much stuff in my life and it didn't appear to be awful to me and so I hid it and it poisoned my ability to trust the Lord. What he despises is to bring it out in the open in prayer before the Lord so that the Lord can do His healing work and liberate us by His grace.

J. R. R. Tolkien has written *The Lord of the Rings* and one of those scenes is when Frodo is stabbed by the Nazgûl and it paralyzes him. I realized that it exactly what happened to me. Our struggle is against powers who use and wound others to stand in power and keep you in the dark. It is all over the world. Finally at least it is hard to recognize spiritual forces that blindside you, because that is a tactic.

The worst lick I ever had in my college career as a football player was when as an end, I was going out for a pass and this half-back intercepted it and so I'm chasing it and at the last minute I saw this blur and this 240lb linebacker just blindsided me, knocked me down and almost knocked me out of the game. I probably had a concussion. My eyes dilated and everything got bright. I didn't expect it coming. If I had expected it, I could have turned and stood against him. **One of the tactics is to blindside you and knocked you down.**

Several years ago I was on the staff of a large church in Dallas and we went through a battery of test by a Christian psychologist and in his interview with me he said, “Everybody gets knocked down.” I was complaining. My primary reaction when I was knocked down, up to that point in my life, was to stay down and say to myself that it wasn’t fair and “God, if you really love me you would never allow this to happen.” Finally, I had to come to point and ask myself what was I going to do. Stay on the ground? I finally got enough courage to get back up and brush myself off and then I was little shaky. Well, this psychologist said, “Everybody gets knocked down. The maturing process is getting back up and addressing who or what knocked you down. Maturity is as how the time shortens you will always be knocked down.” I’ve never forgotten that because I’ve been knocked down so many times, both as an athlete and as a pastor. Hard to recognize spiritual forces that blindside you.



Read with me:

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground,

I love this picture. I use to cringe at pictures like this. **I love the picture of a might warrior for Christ who is armed and unafraid of the conflict or least does not let the fear rule, but God’s Word rule.**

We use to have a drill in football. I think we called it the Oklahoma drill. You’d be in the middle of the circle and you’d be circled by about ten players and you were to move then somebody was going try knock you over. You had to move and identify when they were coming with a blindside and take on the lick and keep standing. You needed good cleats that dung in and you needed to be ready at all times.

We’re to be those kind of warriors who stand in the face of destructive, abusive people and circumstances in the name of Christ and pray through and say, “God, what would you have me do?”

Stand firm then and he describes the pieces of the armament. This would have been a vivid picture of a Roman soldier with the belt on – the Belt of Truth. Paul before this has said, “Put off falsehood and speak the truth for we are members of one another.” Before that he says, “The dynamic in a congregation is speaking the truth in love. We will grow up into Christ who is the head.” In other words, we are not to hide the poison.



Read it with me,

and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

In this context it is talking about **the character transformation that Christ leads us through to put off our old ways, be renewed in the spirit of mind and put on His new ways of responding to people, to God and to situations that bring healing and wholeness and show His love and truth.** It takes warriors to be able to do it in some situations. There is that protection of Christ’s righteous and His transformation of our hearts so that we learn to respond the way He would have us respond in the face of even of evil.

Read with me:

¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶

Those firm stances so that you are not easily knocked over. In addition to all of this, take the shield of faith. Sometimes you have to block destructive stuff coming your way with the armor of God, because it can come at you hot and heavy.

Read it with me:

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

The ancient battles against fortified cities and so one of the schemes or tactics was to shoot flaming arrows over the top and start fires inside so the people would leave the defense section and go put out the fire and panic would ensue and then the enemy could evade. Flaming arrows shot into the air, causing fire. Trusting God in the face of that and not give an inch to the abusive stuff.

Read with me:

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation

We are to keep our minds focused. I don't know if you all know this text. But read it with me, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The first battlefield is in the mind. When I'm knocked down, my thoughts are this is awful and I'll never recover and I have to learn to take that thought captive and say, **"Christ, what would you have me do with experience?"**
God gives us armor.

Read with me:

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸

You've heard plenty of messages about this and all of the armament is defensive and protective, except one thing, **the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.**

I graduated from seminary with my master's degree and I realized that I knew very little about the scripture. I set a goal for my life to learn the scripture and what it means and it has been a struggle all my life, but I've stuck with it and added to it over and over again. It is that sword, learning to wield the scripture, the Word of God, and when His Word comes by His Spirit directly that brings victory and healing. We are to be on the offensive in an abusive and destructive world as ambassadors of Christ who are equipped with the armor of God.

Now, listen to this, read this with me:

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.

It only mentions helmet once, sword once, breastplate once, shouting the Gospel of peace. You realize that is military imagery, but it is the Gospel of peace in the middle of conflict because underneath all of this is the critical nature of praying.

Pray. Be alert and keep on praying. Pray also for me. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly. Pray, keep on praying. Pray that for me. Pray that I may fearlessly do what needs to be done.

We are to be prayer warriors in an abusive world because the prayer that Jesus trains us to pray ends with this in some of the later manuscripts.

Read it:

- “for Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.”

Wow, not Caesar’s, not Bush’s, not Obama’s.

- **“for Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever,**

And what do we say about that.

- **Amen.”**