

# Call to Prayer: Our Over-armor in All in All in All...



Video of the sermon is available [HERE](#).

Ephesians 6:18-24

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, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

<sup>21</sup> So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. <sup>22</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

<sup>23</sup> Peace be to the brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

Audio Trsnacription:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

Well, with us coming to the end of football season, I'm going to use an introduction this morning that may help us refocus our minds a bit back to Ephesians. Perhaps you've heard of this. I am sure that you've seen it. Even if you haven't heard of it, you may not have realized that this is what you were seeing. What I'm talking about is called clear coat. Have you heard of that? Yeah. It's spelled differently by different manufacturers of it. But nevertheless, it has the general term called clear coat. Perhaps I should picture it here for you. Here's a picture of a car with the clear coat that's coming off. This is what clear coat is, it's a finish, it's a final touch. It's frequently used on cars, I think every car

manufacturer does this. Now, they build the car, they provide all of the under coatings, the primers and all of that. And when it gets to the finish stage, there is this clear coat that is applied. And the intention of this is to provide protection, to make it more enduring and to increase the appearance of it because it makes it all shiny and bright. Until it becomes worn and it doesn't stick, until it's not sticking anymore. Here's a picture of a black car and here's a red one, you've seen cars like this around. Matter of fact, if I look at my Ford Focus right now, I can see it on my car at the quarter panels that are in back. Here, let's put this up, it's a picture of what it looks like as it comes off. And here's a picture of what it looks like when it's actually doing its job. Clear coat is to provide protection, make it more enduring and to increase the appearance. Let's put some of these pictures up here. There's the Speedo Kote brand, they kind of spell it different there. And here's another one, Matte Clear Coat and there it is in a spray can that you can get, so you can try and repair it when it comes off. Now the reason I am saying all this is because this is an over all thing, it can be applied to your car, your woodwork, it can be put on furniture at times, it's even on cement. As a matter of fact, if you go to Walmart now, they took up all their tile and they put this down on the floors and it will still do the same thing, it provides protection, makes it more enduring and it makes it more appealing as you look at it.

This over all thing is exactly where the Apostle Paul comes to as he finishes Ephesians for us this morning. I'm going to ask you to turn with me to Ephesians, chapter 6, as we hear the Apostle Paul present the finish, and this finish, like this clear coat, is an over all thing for us. You may recall that in Ephesians, we've been hearing about the armor of God, the full or complete armor, giving us completely what we need for our situation here. And those piece by piece identification, very important things that we put on routinely. The belt of truth girding us, the breastplate of righteousness, the boots of the gospel of peace so that you're steadied with it, to give you stability and standing. And also, taking up, on the aroused situation, the shield of faith, salvation as the helmet and the sword of the Spirit. Those kind of pieces are the very kind of pieces that the Lord, himself, takes up and puts on in Isaiah chapter 59. There is an expression made here, a telling of God's people what God, himself, will do to take up for them. When he sees the situation, then he put on righteousness, as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head. He put on garments of vengeance, taking up for his people, garments of vengeance against the principalities, the powers, the spiritual forces in heavenly places, even as they're influencing human affairs with wars and rumors of wars. He takes up this vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak, the zeal of the Lord of host will accomplish this, the Lord, himself, takes up this armor that he calls us to put on routinely. And when one of those days come, one of those evil days, then knowingly I have to take this up here. With the questions and the discussion we've had about this, I'm going to put out a little sheet that's kind of a quick reference because, you know, this being so vital, what Paul is pointing out here, we should have something to quick reference on this, as a reminder, because we do need to be reminded of this. We do, because it's to be put on routinely. And because at a point of need, we need to take it up. The Lord, himself, does this in this conflict that we are in presently.

And to finish all of this, to put the final coat that adds protection, makes it more enduring, and actually more appealing, he adds what we see this morning in Ephesians,

chapter six, the over all, the over armor for this situation we're in. We know where we're at, he says in verse 10, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might". Be made strong in the super natural strength that resides in him, his might. Verse 11, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil". Verse 13, "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand", in one of those days, "the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm". Verse 14, "Stand therefore," piece by piece, putting it on. And then he says this, which is where we start today, verse 18, "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and all supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints". Did you notice how repeated this was? This putting on what is the over armor to all of this? In ALL prayer, ALL supplications, in ALL times, with ALL perseverance, for ALL the saints, over and over, and over and over. This is to be inclusive. Have you ever heard the phrase, All means all and that's all all means? That's said about trying to understand all that's given in the Bible, all the world has done this. Sometimes, you have to understand it by context. And that's what you have to understand it by here. The context of this call to prayer, which is what he's doing here, as the over all, over armor to the situation we're in, it's a call to prayer. And the context of this is the spiritual warfare, the principalities, the powers, not flesh and blood. It's not them. It's not people. It's those rulers in the heavenly places that you can't see, that you can't track. But we still need provided protection, that's enduring, and actually makes our existence here much more appealing. This over all doesn't chip, it doesn't crack, and it won't peel off. It doesn't get ugly. However, ugly things may come. It doesn't.

This morning, we're going to take a look at this. And we're going to look at it this way. We're going to look at it as he talks about it, through seeking God in those ALLs, in all prayer and all petition, in all times, for all the saints. And then the Apostle Paul wraps this up in what really makes this appealing, in the service of people. You know, the series that we're titling here for Ephesians is "Believers, What You're Into", this is what we're into. Ephesians like no other book presents the blessings, every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, the challenges against principalities and powers in the heavenly places and the provisions, the whole armor, under armor and over armor, the whole armor of God. This book tells us what we're into. like no other. So in Ephesians 6, through seeking God in prayer, over armor via or through all prayer and petition. How'd you get here this morning? Yeah, most everybody came in a car or truck, a vehicle of some sort, a van maybe, that vehicle went on a road. I came in that 2008 blue Ford Focus that has the clear coat coming off on its back quarter panels. That's how I got here, that was via, that was the avenue, that was the means, that's how I got here this morning. And you all came through something. When Paul's talking to us about this over armor, he says this over armor is via, it's through this. This is the avenue, all prayer and all petition. And I ought to have you listen to what a couple of well known Bible teachers say on this subject. First is Warren Wiersbe, he's been around for a while, he says this, "Prayer is the energy that enables the Christian soldier to wear the whole armor and wield the sword. We cannot fight the battle in our own power, no matter how strong or talented we may think we are....Prayer is the power for victory, but not just any kind of prayer. Paul tells us how to pray if we would defeat Satan." It takes this variety in prayer. This is Curtis Vaughn, It should be remembered that the idea in this Greek text is that the construct, the construction, the construct here, is that to stand, we need the

whole armor. To stand through prayer. It's the prayer. This is part and parcel of being in the conflict, through all prayer and petition.

Prayer is just as you're going through your day, you're generally talking to God, you're just generally interacting with him. It's see an event like some folks who slide off the road and you say a prayer. You're interacting with somebody and they don't seem to know the Lord, and you pray for them and ask perhaps, Lord, let there be an opening, an opportunity here. It's just general talking to the Lord. As you're going through the day, a particular challenge comes up and you pray concerning handling this in a way that has a Christian response to it. You know, there are things that are irritating that happen, aren't there. And for your response to that, let me tell you what over that will be a great help, it's this general talking to God that you have going on so that when you face this challenge, it goes well. Like what happened to me this week. Like when I have to pay this charge, even though the company wasn't able to deliver the product like they said they would, and they said I still have to pay this charge. By the way, the cookies arrived on the 15th, we ordered them on the 3rd and they said they would be here for Valentine's Day. Now I still have to pay this high delivery fee even though it wasn't delivered in the time they guaranteed. So we need to pray, because that general talking to God will color the way that you come across, generally talking to God as you go. And petition here. This is laying out specific request. This is laying out what is the need here and not leaving it in generalities. Lord blessed all the missionaries. No. Lord, I'm praying for the missionaries in Myanmar and the children's home, in the midst of the civil war, I pray that they can build this, that they can influence these lives for Christ and have a testimony even in the midst of the civil war. Lord, I pray for our country here that has ongoing unrest and different areas that as we look at a international crisis, and international relationships, that you would grant that we could live quiet and peaceful lives. And for the brethren there. It's praying specifically, petitions. And this is kind of expanded on and Philippians chapter four, verse six: supplication, the petition idea, with thanksgiving, not anxiety, makes the request known to God. This talks about the variety of our prayer, the time we're just generally talking, and then getting specific in laying requests out.

And then he adds this, in all prayer, in all supplication, in all times. And what he's saying here is we're seeing these as opportunities. These are opportunities to get the over armor in place, for protection, for endurance, for appeal, the appeal of it, seeing always opportunities. The idea here is the consistency that we generate in praying. Men ought to pray, as a matter of fact, Jesus talked about that. In Luke chapter 18, Jesus gives us a story where he says, the point of this parable is that men ought to pray always, not just males but people ought to pray always, and not lose heart. This is consistency in our prayers, that we are consistently here. As a matter of fact, Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Pray without ceasing. Now, the idea isn't that you're always saying prayers. That's not a possibility. You know, I don't really want the doctor, when he is doing a surgery at the hospital, to be always saying prayers, he needs to be focused on what he's doing with that instrument. Would you agree with that? But at the same time, there is still this, this heart, this disposition of prayer. I do want him to be in a disposition of prayer when he's doing that, even though he's not specifically praying, he needs to be there, in a disposition of prayer. And so do you and I, in all of the circumstances we're in, this is

prayer without ceasing. This is always being in a place to go into God's presence because I'm always in his presence. Do you ever have to prepare your heart for worship? Prepare your heart for worship. What is that? That's where our heart is to be all the time. Give your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable worship. It's what we do, it's where we go. And and this whole thing about praying isn't something we put on. It's more described like this for the believer. Praying to the believer is like breathing to a person. A person who is a believer prays just like they kind of breathe. And the idea is to have a heart that's prepared for worship. Going into His presence, because we're always there. And we're just going there. That's the prayer without ceasing, in everything prayer, supplication, petitioning with thanksgiving, you let the request be known to God. This is the over armor that we're to have.

Let me add this one as well. praying in the Spirit. In the Spirit of God, this is the locality of our prayer. Remember when Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman? He said, It's neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem where people, men, worship God. How do you say it? It must be in what? In spirit and in truth. The Spirit of God dwelling in us, in reality, that's what God is seeking. And I'm going to have you look at a passage with me here, because this passage is so appropriate, it's so apropos for where we are at in praying. One of the most important endeavors that we have is to be here in God's presence, with that disposition of always able to run there, run to Him in prayer, not always able to be thinking specifically on it, but always there to run. And I want you to see what God has provided for us, in this present darkness, this present duress that we know. Do you have things that arise that are distressing to you, that are duress? Do you? Do you notice that that kind of comes daily? Jesus said, Sufficient for the day is the evil, the trouble there of. Paul said that we are to redeem the time, make the most of the time, because the days are evil. There is that present duress. And what God has provided for us is this Spirit that I can always be in the disposition, that I run to him. Abba, Father, Daddy, and that is the Spirit that He says. That is the Spirit we have as children, that we cry Abba, Father and that's repeated in the New Testament.

Now, I want you to see what that provision is by looking at Romans chapter eight. And I want you to see what this is that God has provided. Romans chapter eight, verse 26, where he says this, "Likewise", concerning the sufferings of this present time, like you notice in verse 18, "For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with a glory that will be revealed in us." There is difficulties, there is distresses, there are troubles. And in that, he says, verse 26, "Likewise, the Spirit helps in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for, as we ought". No matter how sharp you are, we don't get it. I don't get it. We don't get it. We we don't see these principalities and powers. We're aware of them, we don't see them. And we don't know how to pray as we ought. But there's that disposition. There's that running to daddy that's there. And that gives us the power. Notice what he says here, "For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words". Verse 27, "And he who searches hearts," that's ours, "knows what is the mind of the Spirit that's in us, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." So folks, just coming and with groanings accomplishes God's will. He know what's there. What a tremendous provision! This is amazing! This is the power of us, in this armor, prayer and petition, at all times, in all these opportunities, consistently,

because the Spirit is there doing that. Now, I know a lot of people get a little uncomfortable when we talk about the Spirit. But I ask you, is that not biblical? That is, that is. That's what we have. That's what's going on. Praise God, this thing is bigger than he would make. Because it needs to be.

And next he says, being watchful. You know, these words are translated in verse 18, "at all times in the Spirit". Paul says, this is taking place in the realm that we're living in, it's in all times. It's in all prayer and petition. And here, he says in this time, it's being watchful. And specifically what that word means is to not be sleeping on this. Be alert. Be in a place that you're kind of scrutinizing, your looking at the events of the world and thinking of generally talking to God. You're experiencing what's happening in your life. And you're thinking petitions, petitions, sometimes too deep for word, this is what we're requesting. That's the way we're going here through life, he says, in this all petitions. You know what I think of when I hear this of this watchfulness? I think of Isaiah when he was facing a situation, it was made clear to him where his people were going, what God was doing, how he was moving, he just came to the Lord in prayer, not sleeping, Isaiah chapter six, he sees the Lord high and lifted up. And he comes to Him in prayer, I'm undone, I'm undone, for I am unclean, and I live among a people with unclean lips. Being alert to prayer, realize our insufficiency here. But that God wants us in on it. Even if it's with groanings too deep for words, He wants us to be alert, scrutinizing the situation, with generally talking to God and presenting petitions and sometimes just groaning, getting the word accomplished. When a car goes off the road in front of us on the ice, when we have people who are traveling during adverse weather, when we see impending international crisis, being watchful, alert, interacting.

And I want to bring this one in too, in all perseverance, sticking to it, not like the peeling clear coat, but sticking to it. So it doesn't become ugly, but it enhances the appearance. You know, in Luke chapter 18, when Jesus said men ought to pray always, he presented the picture of this. There was a certain widow that lived in a city and she went to an unrighteous judge, who didn't really care about men or God. And she petitioned him and petitioned him and petitioned him and petitioned him and kept coming and petitioning him. And remember what that unrighteous judge did? Do you remember? Yeah, he said this, She wears me out by this constant coming! Get this woman taken care of! And Jesus says this, How much more will your heavenly Father deliver justice to those who cry out to him, day and night? And he said that so we might not lose heart. But men ought to pray always. Are there some disheartening things in your life? Maybe how it's going with certain relationships, maybe things that kind of have your heart? I know there are with me. Don't press me or it may all spill out. There are, there are. Men ought to pray always. And you know sometimes in the grace of God, he just opens the blinder a little bit, and you see what he's accomplishing. And even if it's too deep for words, keep persistently coming. Someday, we will know fully, just as we've been fully known.

And then this, in prayer for all the saints, all their interests. You know, some people have interests that I don't really have an interest in. "Oh, I really want this test to go well". That's a good thing. And the idea here is the sensitivity to what's going on in other people's lives. "We lost our dog." Now, I'm not saying that's what's happening now, but we have lost a dog. And I want you to know, some hearts were very heavy with losing that

dog. And yet, there are major issues too, turning points in people's lives, going here, going there, making a decision about this relationship, what I'm going to do with it. All saints, all saints, being open to their interest. That is the appeal. Paul adds this, and praying for me, specifically here, pray for me. And he tells us how, verse 19, how to pray for him. This is a specificity. He says, praying at all times, perseverance, supplication for all the saints. And he says, "for me, that the words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel". This thing that is hidden to some people, Satan blinding their minds to this. Paul is in prison here. He's in a tight closed down prison for him. He is still pending judgment there in Rome, he can't go out and do what he used to do. He's confined, he is in this place. And he is not to leave, "pray for me" in this, that I may be able to present the good news. Verse 20, "for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly", I may be frank and open about this, "as I ought to speak". Isn't that a good prayer request for Paul? Wouldn't that be a good prayer request for me? Wouldn't that be good prayer requests for you? It's specific here, specific, to see specific results.

And then he wraps this up by talking about how this applies here for us, how this plays out. Paul presents the specificity with frankness in speaking, and then he applies the finish to this letter that is so full. It has been said that this letter has more in it in a short space concerning believers lives and experience than all the letters of the New Testament. Romans is great, it is great. There's more here in Ephesians, more, different, valuable, both valuable, but more. And this one, this is the way he finishes, by turning to the interaction with people. He says this, aiming to stay in touch. He says I'm sending Tychicus to you. He says it this way, verses 21-22, "So that you also may know how I am and what I'm doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord", the deacon in the Lord, that's the word that use there, "will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very reason, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts." To be encouraged, a major function of the church is this thing of staying in touch. I want you to know, this has been so hard. When I talk to people from Indianapolis, where they've got mega churches, 1000s of people, more than live in Hartford City, in their church, when I talk to them, they talk about how hard this last couple of years has been. It's been hard on Heartland too. We need community, interaction, fellowship, we need it. Acts 2:42, this is what the church was to do: the apostles teaching, we do that, fellowship, the breaking bread, prayer. This is what the church was to do. The whole situation now has been very hard. I bear responsibility in regards to seeking this fellowship, I will give an account for that. We need this. We need this.

And I think, How do we resolve this? So on March the sixth, we're going to rent out Wandering Wheels in Upland. And there'll be an opportunity for the families of God to get together and just be there. There's ladies Bible studies available, men's prayer group, what it rich thing that is and along these lines of our over armor. We need this. And we need to think how do we advance the Kingdom of God by community here and our hearts needing to be staying in touch. It's just not the proclamation of the Word, that's vital. But we also need the rub on rub on rub of one another. We need to be provoked and irritated by one another sometimes. And we need to think about how we resolve that. Because this is the love for one another. We need to think about how we work with

our differences to accomplish the rule of God in people's lives, in my life, in your life. We need this. Paul sends Tychicus just for the purpose of getting in touch and staying in touch and being in touch. We need this, the church functions that way.

And speaking words of encouragement there. This past week, I had opportunity to interact with the family, talking with them. And they talked about a culture of encouragement. This is the idea of intentionally building up another person. And they talked about that not really being established. We need to intentionally think of what brings strength to another person. There are people in our fellowship who have that gift. It is the gift of encouragement. There is a gift of exhortation, there is this thing of coming alongside and infusing strength. That is a good thing. But we need to have a culture that intentionally, intentionally infuses encourage. And that's what Paul brings out here at the end of this thing. Notice how he says this, verse 22, "that he may encourage your hearts", verse 23, "Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father", and Paul's referring to all the things he's talked about, the love of God in Christ, the faith that he's delivered to us, "and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible", a genuine love for him. What do I say and do that edifies the body? I want you to know this is playing on my heart. And we need to, we need to go somewhere, we need to be doing something that does this, stays in touch. Even during a hard time like COVID? Absolutely! It needs to be advanced. We need to go forward. We need to go forward, taking precautions for people safety, absolutely, but going forward and I intend to do that. God help us in this all in all that we're in.

Father in heaven, we a needy people, we are a faltering people. We are discouraged and hurt. And sometimes, Lord, we just have the breath of refreshed wind from you. And the Spirit praying as we ought aligns us with the will of God. That's where we want to go, that's what we wanted do. Because, Lord, you're at the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. It's all from you and through you and to you. To God be the glory forever and ever. It's where we are. You're our all in all. In Jesus name, amen.