

Radical Protection - PART 5
Praying in the Spirit
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Ephesians 6:18-20
Subject: What Christians should do once they have clothed themselves with the whole armor of God in this cosmic battle against forces opposed to God
Complement: pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers
Exegetical idea: Christians who have clothed themselves with the whole armor of God in this cosmic battle against forces opposed to God should pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.
Preaching idea: **Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers who have clothed themselves with the whole armor of God to pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.

Are you thankful today for the radical protection that God alone can provide? Protection to stand against the schemes of the devil. Protection to extinguish all of his fiery darts and to stand firm in the faith.

In this series on Radical Protection, we have carefully examined Paul's counsel to Christians in his letter the church in Ephesus. We have learned that we are all involved in a cosmic battle with forces opposed to God. God longs to protect us but we need to choose to receive the protection that He alone can provide. We need to clothe ourselves with the panoplia, the whole armor of God. Let's read Paul's counsel, recorded in Ephesians 6:10-17. I invite you to take your scroll and read out loud with me. "....."

We have studied about putting on the defensive weapons and taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God. By the end of Ephesians 6:17, Paul has completed his description of the panoplia, the whole armor of God but he has not completed his discussion of radical protection. Did you hear what I just said? By the end of Ephesians 6:17 Paul has

completed his description of the whole armor of God but he has not completed his discussion of radical protection. What Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:18-20 is also vitally important for those who long for radical protection for themselves and for their families.

So I invite you to read with me the last portion of your scroll, Ephesians 6, beginning with verse 18. “.....”

We have moved beyond a description of the armor. Now Paul urges us to pray. Praying is something that you do while you are putting on the armor of God. Praying is something that you do when you are taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God. And praying is something that you do moment by moment throughout the day.

Notice what Paul tells us in Eph 6:18. Praying always. The NIV translates this verse “Praying on all occasions.” Literally, “Praying at all times.” Not just a 30 second prayer before you leave the house in the morning. Not just a 10 second “thank you for this food” prayer. Not just a 15 second “Now I lay me down to sleep” prayer at the end of the day. Those who have taken up the whole armor of God, including the Taser of the Spirit, and admonished to pray always, on all occasions, at all times. That reminds me of Paul’s admonition in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 “pray without ceasing.”

And please note that this is a special type of praying. It is praying “in the Spirit”. Notice, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” The NIV translates this way, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? A similar expression is found in the small epistle of Jude verse 20: “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal

life.”

What does it mean to pray in the Spirit, to pray in the Holy Spirit? That an important question to ask, because those who clothe themselves with the armor of God, taking up the Taser of the Spirit are called to pray in the Spirit always, on all occasions, at all times. To pray in the Spirit does not mean to pray a certain type of prayer, or a certain style of prayer. To pray in the Spirit means to pray guided by the Spirit, to pray in harmony with the Spirit, to pray enabled by the Spirit, to pray empowered by the Spirit.

Listen to Paul’s encouraging words in Romans 8:26. “Likewise the spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Just as the Holy Spirit brings the rhema of God to your remembrance in your battle against the forces of evil, so the Holy Spirit helps you to pray always, on all occasions, at all times. The Holy Spirit prays with you, through you, for you.

Have you ever wanted to cry out to God and you just didn’t know what to say? Don’t be anxious. Don’t be afraid. The Holy Spirit will help you with your prayers. One of the ways that the Holy Spirit helps you with your prayers is by bringing the rhema of God to your remembrance. Then you can pray the rhema of God back to Him. That is one way that we pray in the Spirit.

It happened in our family when our oldest son was 10 years old. My wife was driving home in our Volvo sedan. Our two boys were in the car, along with Bodil’s friend Lynda and her two boys. As my wife was pulling into our garage, she turned off the car and let it coast the last few feet. You can do that with a manual transmission. As soon as Christopher heard the

engine stop, he opened the rear right passenger door and started to get out—but the car was still moving. The rear right tire rolled right up onto his foot. A Volvo sedan weighs about 3500 pounds, and one of the 4 tires was resting firmly on his foot. He cried out, “Mommy, you’re on my foot!” At that moment, my wife panicked. She is usually cool, calm, and collected, but she had just driven over her son! So she started the car, but instead of putting the transmission into reverse, she accidentally put it into first gear, and drove up onto Christopher’s leg. “Wrong way, Mommy!” Now Bodil’s heart was really pounding. She put the car into reverse, drove off Christopher’s leg, stopped the car, and ran around to the right rear door of the car. There were tire marks across Christophers ankle and up his leg. Bodil quickly ran and got an icepack, asked her friend Lynda to watch the other 3 boys and headed to the doctor’s office. The doctor told her that he was concerned there might be damage at the growth plate and encouraged her to go directly to a pediatric orthopedic surgeon. As she was driving through town, her heart pounding, she heard a little voice singing in the back seat. Christopher was singing a Scripture song that he had learned as a child. It was an ancient prayer of the Psalmist David.

Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.

From the end of the earth I will cry to You,

When my heart is overwhelmed

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Christopher was praying in the Spirit. He didn’t know what to pray. He had never been run over by a car before, and you can be sure that the enemy was hurling fiery darts at him, darts of fear, darts of anger, darts of despair. But the Holy Spirit came to his aid. The Holy Spirit brought to Christopher’s remembrance the rhema of God.

Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
I will abide in Your tabernacle (forever)
I will trust in the shelter of your wings.

Praying in the Spirit. When my wife and my son arrived at the hospital, the pediatric orthopedic surgeon examined Christopher and said, “There appears to be no damage.” Now how to you explain that? I’ll tell you how. Christopher was praying in the Spirit. He was praying in agreement with the Spirit, in harmony with the Spirit, enabled by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not only bring the rhema of God to your remembrance; the Holy Spirit will also enable you to pray, and will pray with you and on your behalf.

Pray always, on all occasions, at all times with all kinds of prayers and supplications. That combination of the “prayer and supplication” occurs frequently in Paul’s writings. To Christians in Philippi, Paul says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” That’s exactly what the first followers of Jesus were doing in the Upper Room after His ascension to heaven. Dr. Luke records in Acts 1:14, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with

the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” They were following the example of Jesus. The author of the book of Hebrews testifies that Jesus “offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” Hebrews 5:7.

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to of friend. There are all kinds of prayers. Prayers of praise in the midst of this conflict with the kingdom of darkness, that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Prayers of thanksgiving that God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. Prayers of confession, both of our sin and of our acceptance of Jesus as our Savior, Lord, Protector and Deliverer.

Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers and supplications. Supplications are specific requests to God. God wants to come to Him with specific requests. Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you.” Matthew 7:7 And how do we know what specific supplications to make? How do we know what is appropriate and what is inappropriate? Again, the Holy Spirit is our Helper. When we pray in the Spirit, we are fully open and receptive to His leading. And we can always pray as Jesus prayed after a specific supplication, “Father, not my will, but Yours be done.”

In this great cosmic battle with forces opposed to God, clothe yourself with the armor of God, taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God, receive the radical protection that God alone can provide, and pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers and supplications.

And don’t just pray for yourself. Notice what Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:18, “.....” Pray for all the saints. That word “supplication” implies a specific request. Don’t

just pray “for the whole world”. Pray for specific people, by name. You say, “Derek, How do I know who to pray for?” What’s the answer? The Holy Spirit will guide you. When you pray in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit will lead you. He will bring the names of people to your remembrance. He will bring groups of people to your remembrance who need protection, who need strength, who need wisdom. When that happens, don’t argue with the Spirit. Don’t put off praying for another time and another place. Just pray right then. You may only have time for a few seconds prayer, but just pray.

I’ve been impressed by the Spirit to pray for a very specific group of people. Some months ago, our programming from the Forest Lake Church began to be aired on DIRECTV 368. DIRECTV is in 19 million households in the US, with a potential viewing audience of 40-50 million people. Some of us have been praying that the Spirit will lead people to Hope TV on channel 368. Is that an appropriate prayer to pray? Absolutely. Why? Because Jesus said that the Holy Spirit has the specific mission of leading people into truth. So we’ve been praying in the Spirit, we’ve been offering up that specific supplication to God.

Would you like to hear some of the answers to those prayers? (read letters)

Here is a note from John in Michigan:

Thank you for your devotion to teaching the Word of God. When we signed up for DIRECTV, we had never heard of the Hope Channel. We simply discovered it one day when surfing for quality programming. I just happened to catch a part of Hope Sabbath School on Channel 368 approximately 4 weeks ago. I now have my DVR set to record every episode of the Hope Sabbath School. As a fellow believer in Christ as our only hope of

salvation, I find find inspiration and encouragement in each program. I'm a member of a local Church of God. Keep up the good work!

Helen writes from Texas:

Thank you for the Hope Channel on DIRECTV 368. I was searching the channels for something to give me HOPE and found the word HOPE on the Hope Sabbath School and tuned in! I have been watching to Hope Sabbath Sunday School ever since and I have learned more about the Bible just in the few months since I have found the Hope Channel than in a lifetime. I am now 61 years old. Oh how wonderful it would have been to have been taught years ago the things you are teaching now. God bless you for getting my life going in the right direction and for giving me hope.

Maureen writes from Kentucky:

I was just surfing the Christian Channels on DIRECTV and I saw Hope Sabbath School on Channel 368. What I really like about Hope Sabbath School is how you all study topically. The questions you ask the class make me think and the answers are based on what God says and not man's opinions. I am a Christian and I am currently connected to Southeast Christian Church and attend regularly.

Deanna writes from Massachusetts:

Greetings in Jesus' name. I have been so blessed by your DAILY HOPE Bible studies. I watch in DIRECTV 368 every time you are on and I am home. 75% of my television

viewing in the Hope Channel, Channel 368. I am not an Adventist yet, but my brother is, and he has been talking to me. I share all that I learn with a special friend who does not have DIRECTV. I have been revived by your Bible teachings and I thank God for you all. The class interaction on Hope Sabbath School is great. I participate as if I am there. May God continue to bless you!

Maureen called me from California. She had tried everything and her life was going nowhere. Then she discovered Hope Sabbath School on DIRECTV channel 368 and now she is attending a local church and she is finding peace and joy in the Lord. She has even started Bible studies.

And just this past Thursday I got a phone call from Gloria in Texas. She and her husband Craig are in a full-time Christian ministry that cares for the homeless, alcoholics and drug addicts. Just a few months ago, Gloria came under strong conviction that God wanted her to honor all of His commandments, including the 4th commandment. So she started remembering the Sabbath day to keep in holy from sundown on Friday evening to sundown on Saturday evening. It was about that time that she just happened to discover the Hope Channel on DIRECTV 368. She started watching It Is Written and Hope Sabbath School. She and her husband have completed the Discover Bible Studies and they now have a group of 11 people meeting every Sabbath at their mission. Yesterday I sent Gloria a copy of The Radical Teachings of Jesus which includes what Jesus taught about the Sabbath.

These are just a few of the life-changing miracles that God is working through our programming on DIRECTV channel 368. We continue to pray in the Spirit a specific

supplication that God will lead people by His Spirit to the precious truths of His Word and to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Perhaps some of you will be led by the Spirit to join us in praying for DIRECTV families across North America that God would lead them to find Hope on channel 368. The Holy Spirit may have some other special intercession in mind for you. Be open to the Spirit's leading, and then do what the Spirit asks you to do. Pray in the Spirit at all times, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers.

Paul concludes his teaching on radical protection by asking Christians to pray for him too. Christian leaders need our prayers because they are a special target of the enemy. If Satan can bring a Christian leader down, he can cause severe damage to the cause of Christ. We all need radical protection in this battle against principalities and power opposed to God, and that is especially true for Christian leaders. So Paul says, Please pray in the Spirit for me. Make specific supplications on my behalf. And I would ask the same of you, and I believe that every leader here on our team would cherish the same prayers on their behalf. Would you pray also for us?

Satan will try to distract you from praying in the Spirit always, on all occasions, at all times. That is why you need to be watchful, diligent, intentional. This is not a picnic. It's a battle. The forces of darkness are hurling fiery darts that have the potential to wound and destroy. We need radical protection, and the good news is that God longs to provide that radical protection for each one of us. The One who has saved us by His mercy and grace is also our Protector and our Deliverer.

Take up the whole armor of God, including the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God, and pray always in the Spirit, on all occasions, at all times, with all kinds of prayers and

supplications. Pray guided by the Spirit, pray in harmony with the Spirit, pray enabled by the Spirit, and pray empowered by the Spirit. Pray not only for yourself, but for all the saints, pray specifically by name for those that the Holy Spirit brings to your remembrance, and pray for your Christian leaders too.

If you would like to share this series of messages with someone else, we are going to make this series available on DVD. I believe that there are many who need to hear this vital teaching from the Word of God. You can also watch this series online at

www.radicalprotection.com.

Go forward now in the name of the Lord, clothed with the armor of God, taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God, and praying in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.