

Power of Prayer in Missions

We have been talking throughout missions month about the Great Commission- God's mission to make disciples of Jesus throughout the whole world. And he has not chosen to accomplish this mission using powerful angelic beings or laser light shows from heaven...he has chosen to accomplish this mission through his followers. And one of the most essential tools he has given us in addition to his Word and his Spirit to carry out this mission is prayer. This morning I want to look with you at the **Context and the Content of Prayer in Missions.**

First let's look at the **Context of Prayer in Missions: Spiritual War.** Do you remember exactly where you were when you first heard the news that the planes hit the **world trade center on September 11, 2001 (Picture)**. Virtually all our hands go up. I remember I was a sophomore in college and I was getting ready for my 9am class and turned on the TV. I immediately went and woke up Todd and my other dorm mates as we sat in disbelief. While this made a massive impact on the whole world, for my generation, this was the first act of war on home soil we ever experienced. It quickly broke my peacetime, domestic bubble that I had grown up with. It's when I realized that we were in a war with an enemy that wanted to destroy us and our way of life.

As significant of a war as the war on terror was and still is today, or World War II was in my grandfather's day, or the threat of North Korea's nuclear program might be, do we realize an even greater war that we are in every day?

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not battle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

In other words, when we engage in the work of the great commission as all believers are called to do, we are engaging in a spiritual war. Paul uses this imagery consistently in his letters.

2 Timothy 4:7 at the end of his life Paul says,

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

And in **1 Timothy 6:12** he tells Timothy,

Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life to which you were called.

Because engaging in the great commission is spiritual war we engage against a spiritual enemy. And as Ephesians 6 tells us that enemy is Satan, the powerful foe that seeks to kill, steal and destroy. I was a wrestler from the time I was about 7. I couldn't find a picture of me as a wrestler when I was a little kid, but I have a picture that shows you more or less what that was like **(Picture)**.

In wrestling you can win by pinning your opponent or by having more points when the time runs out on the clock at the end of three periods. Toward the end of that third period you will inevitably hear the coaches yell out 1 minute, thirty seconds. And the wrestler who is losing, down on points, will get desperate and immediately try to go all out, to outscore or pin you before the time runs out. Because no one fights harder than a foe who knows he is about to be defeated. Friends this is exactly true for us in our mission. We are at war against a foe who knows he is ultimately defeated and he is acting like a desperate foe. We must be aware of this! Because when we are engaged in the mission of making disciples, sharing our faith, serving our city and world, we are engaged in war with a desperate foe.

Do you realize you are in a war? Now some of us know this and experience this intimately on a daily basis. You are not blinded to the reality of the war going on around us on all fronts. Maybe because you have seen the enemy's work up close and personal in missions, or in your family, you are engaged in ministry and so you see it clearly and I don't need to convince you that we are in a war. But some of us are living as if there is no war, that life is one of domestic peace, endless entertainment, comfort, and bliss. Come sit in on some of the meeting I have with people who are experiencing the warfare in a very real way. Or maybe you know you are supposed to be at war, but you are distracted by the luxuries of peacetime while the battle rages on around you. But when your spiritual eyes are opened, you will see war all around you. In fact, you will see the physical problems and tragedies in our world today as all symptoms of this spiritual war. Acts of sheer evil and despair, like another school shooting have a way of shaking us to the reality of this spiritual war. When we hear of a video of someone being beheaded in the name of their god, we realize that we are in a spiritual war. Our brothers and sisters in many places around the world know firsthand that they are in a spiritual war. 2017 so far is the highest recorded year for the persecution of Christians. According to Christianity Today- Approximately 215 million Christians are experiencing high, very high or extreme persecution. [\(Show Map\)](#). We are engaged in a spiritual war.

And until we really believe this we will not pray as we ought. Paul makes this connection for us between missions and the role of prayer.

Ephesians 6:17-18

*Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with **all prayer and supplication, Praying on every occasion in the Spirit, and keeping awake for this with all perseverance.***

Prayer is the communication tool by which the weapons of warfare are deployed to the frontlines of the spiritual battle. Prayer is for the accomplishment of a wartime mission. Is this not what we see from Jesus?

Matthew 9:36-38

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest

is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

John Piper:

It is as though the field commander, Jesus, called in the troops, gave them a crucial mission to "Go and bear fruit", handed each of them a personal transmitter coded to the frequency of the general's headquarters, and said, "Comrades, the general has a mission for you. He aims to see it accomplished.

And to that end he has authorized me to give each of you personal access to him through these transmitters. If you stay true to his mission and seek his victory first, he will always be as close as your transmitter, to give tactical advice and to send in air cover when you or your comrades need it."

Prayer is the walkie-talkie on the battlefield of the world. It calls in for the accurate location of the target of the Word of God. It calls in to ask for the protection of air cover. It calls in to ask for firepower to blast open a way for the tanks of the Word of God. It calls in the miracle of healing for the wounded soldiers. It calls in supplies for the forces. And it calls in the needed reinforcements. It is astounding when we think about it, that God in his sovereignty has chosen the instrument of prayer to move his strong arm into action. This is a divine, wondrous mystery! There are powerful, miraculous things that will not happen if we do not pray. And conversely there are some things that will only happen if we do fervently pray. And so, do not loose heart in your prayers. Your prayers are never in vain. Some have been praying for the salvation of a friend, family member...or the healing of someone you love. Or for the salvation of a people group...

Only when we see ourselves "on mission" and view our mission as war will we see prayer as the powerful supply chain that it was designed to be. Do we see ourselves on mission? Are we praying like we are in a time of war or a time of peace?

The Content of Prayer in Missions

What are the wartime prayers we should be praying?

For More Workers

Matthew 9:38

Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

For Bold, Winsome Gospel Proclamation

Ephesians 6:19

And also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

For Open Doors to the Gospel

Colossians 4:3

At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison.

For Effective Spreading of the Gospel

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.

For Repentance

2 Timothy 2:25

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth

For Freedom from Satan's Snares

2 Timothy 2:26

They may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

For Open Hearts to Hear and Receive the Gospel

Acts 16:14

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

Who should we pray for?

Those in our Sphere of Influence

Our Church and City

Our Missionaries

Global Fulfillment of the Great Commission

OperationWorld.org (Slide)

Where should we Pray?

In Your Home

Corporately through Services, Small Groups, Prayer Groups

Boiler Room Corporate Prayer on Sunday Mornings, Room 33P

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Pattie Harris

Wednesday Night Corporate Prayer

Conference Room

6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Hope Glavin

Sunday Night Corporate Prayer

Sanctuary

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Simon & Jill Shute

Prayer Walk- Next Sunday, 3:30pm Meets at City Church

Billy Graham understood the power of prayer in mission- "When he was asked about the most important steps in preparing for an evangelistic outreach, he always answered: there are three things that matter most: Prayer, prayer and prayer."

Prayer Time:

Local- Mike Figueroa

Global- Pattie Harris