

## My Thoughts for Sunday, 7 June 2015

### Praying in the Spirit

*“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 Lord’s people.(all the Saints)”*  
Ephesians 6:18.

When I first read this verse I was confused. What does it mean to “pray in the spirit?” This statement was unknown to me. It was time to go to some scriptural authority. I immediately accessed the “famous www.” This seems to be my first source of information; because I don’t have to leave my desk or browse through numerous research books! This is also a very limited and non-beneficial means to gain insight to the desires of our Lord! This also proved to be an exercise in futility as I found all sorts of explanations for this (I found out later) very simple instruction. I was sitting there, reading and wondering, when something or someone tapped me on my subconscious and answered my puzzling question. Go to the Word of God.

I had been leading a Bible Class for several weeks dealing with The Full Armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-18) We had studied the five defensive pieces of this armor; The Belt of Truth, The Breastplate of Righteousness, Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace, The Shield of Faith and The Helmet of Salvation. Then we learned of the one offensive piece of that armor, The Sword of the Spirit, and how it was different from the other objects in that it not only protected us but gave us the ability to move the spiritual army back and to actually save lives. Up to this point we had not considered the final portion of the instructions Paul gave to the people of Ephesus, *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”*

I knew the only place I could find a definitive answer to my questions was to go to the authority responsible for having this puzzling statement written in the first place, God and His holy Word. I proceeded first to the “Thru the Bible, Commentary Series on Ephesians” This was written by J. Vernon McGee, a well known teacher, lecturer and author (1903-1988) who also hosted a radio program by the same name for twenty-one years. He had many titles and letters after his name, possibly a good source of direction to the answers to my questions.

Looking into Mr. McGee’s commentary, I find, by his thinking, we have a second offensive piece of armor; *“...and pray in the Spirit, on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”* In brief, he stated that praying in the Spirit is not just a grocery list of things we want Him to deliver. This is a serious action with the knowledge that we are weak and ill prepared to confront the enemy we know we are up against. We go directly to God with supplication, an urgent request that we may lay hold of His spiritual resources that we might be filled with the fullness of God.

The apostle Paul made it very clear that prayer was of great benefit to all persons fighting this spiritual battle against the forces of evil. We do not put on this armor that we might fight our own individual battles but that we might put up a forceful, strong front as the militant church of Christ. Telling us to pray in the Spirit is not proclaiming some dramatic, showy or charismatic means of prayer. No, it is, as I said earlier, serious supplication to God for Him to place on us the spiritual capability to plead to Him for the necessary attitude and ability to ask Him for help for His saints to do battle with the dark forces of evil. Without His Holy Spirit we can do nothing in any stage of this battle. We have no abilities except that which He freely bestows on us if we earnestly and sincerely ask.

In another resource, "The Peoples Bible" a commentary, we are directed to James 1:6-7 *"But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."* This is telling us that an essential feature of prayer is that it comes from a heart filled with faith. *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."* Hebrews 11:6. We know that faith is only gained as a free gift by the working of the Holy Spirit. *"For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."* Ephesians 2:18.

Paul was inspired to write *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."* This *"on all occasions and with all kinds of prayers and requests"* means exactly that. It does not mean just when we feel we have a problem we can't solve by ourselves or just what we deem as "serious." God said at all times with all kinds of prayers. Let Him decide which prayers are in your best interest and best for His purposes. Paul goes on to say to *"keep on praying for all the Lord's people.(all the Saints)"* All God's people, all the Saints describes all those believers in Christ who have put on the Armor of God through hearing the Gospel and who are willingly standing beside us in the battle—we are not alone.

Never give up on your prayers. Prayers given in the Spirit, which is with God at our side and directing us with His Holy Spirit, will always be answered by Him in His time. It is important that we ask for these things with the request that His will is to be accomplished in all things, not ours. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians *"...pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* Praying continually does not mean we must go through life on our knees with our hands clasped. Praying continually and in the Spirit means to bring ALL your requests to Him with sincerity of heart with the deep understanding that the Holy Spirit will guide you in your fervent supplication to your Lord for God's will to be accomplished in your life. I must stress again - we are not alone - for God is with us and told us, *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."* Hebrews 13:5