

Energizing Encouragement

Ephesians 6:21-24 Sunday AM, May 12, 2024

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 6:18-24 (NASB95) With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.

And so, today we conclude our study in the letter to the Ephesian believers. Remember where these closing words live . . . **For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light. . . 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Eph. 5:8, 10, 15-16** How does this live? Be controlled/filled w Spirit—seen in part by speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, **always giving thanks for all things in name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in fear of Christ.** This led to clarifying what working together looks like for wives, husbands, children, fathers, and slaves—ALL done responding not merely to those over you on earth, but all submission and service done as **slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.** True biblical faith does not merely determine right and wrong and then act. It dependently looks for protection and provision from God. **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, Why? so you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.** How seriously do you take God’s Words to protect yourself? Is there proof you value and actively utilize the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace—that you live with the shield of faith in front of you—meaning consciously looking to God—remembering His character, the promise of His Spirit, present blessing, and future reward for those who live under the King for His kingdom? Is your head/your mind protected and directed by the helmet of salvation? Do you live by the Spirit of God enlightening the Word of God which like a sword destroys every other Word? Are you mobilized by this same Spirit of God to pray **with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”** There is a work to be done, and perhaps the greatest battle will be your yielding to the Lord. As it is your heart’s desire, pray this powerful hymn to the tune of Crown Him with many Crowns.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Make Me a Captive, Lord**

Next, Paul zeroed in on himself—**PRAY FOR ME, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.** The good news of the opportunity of reconciliation with God and willing submission to His will is first for you, but then true response to this gospel to proclaim it clearly and confidently is not merely for the pastor or for the gifted, it is the mission of all believers. Sharing this mission and living it out together makes for close relationships. So Paul continues, **21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.** Sing the heart of gospel service that unites us with Paul, Tychicus, and the believers in Ephesus.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Lord, Let Me Serve *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Order My Steps Scripture: Nehemiah 4:1–23**

(NASB95) Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. 2 He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones?” 3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was near him and he said, “Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!” 4 Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. 5 Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders. 6 So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. 7 Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, and that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. 8 All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it. 9 But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night. 10 Thus in Judah it was said, “The strength of the burden bearers is failing. Yet there is much rubbish; And we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall.” 11 Our enemies said, “They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them and put a stop to the work.” 12 When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, “They will come up against us from every place where you may turn,” 13 then I stationed men in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows. 14 When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: “Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses.” 15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. 16 From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates; and the captains were behind the whole house of Judah. 17 Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon. 18 As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me. 19 I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another. 20 “At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.” 21 So we carried on the work with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared. 22 At that time I also said to the people, “Let each man with his servant spend the night within Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and a laborer by day.” 23 So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us removed our clothes, each took his weapon even to the water.

Offering: *Doxology:

What an inspiring passage from Nehemiah of God’s people working together against opposition to rebuild the walls. Dependent upon God in prayer, they continued with both sword AND trowel to build and defend. This is kingdom work under God. Likewise, Paul battles for gospel proclamation and church planting against those who oppose. But he is not alone. He serves under Christ, through Christ by the power of the Spirit. But he also serves WITH others under Christ. This too is kingdom work. Can you see your part in kingdom work? Then, dependent on God in prayer to order our steps in His Word, continue the work.

***Hymn #428 (Red): To the Work**

You may be seated. Our country sets aside today for mothers. Do you appreciate this day to thank God for mothers? Today’s tendency to view worth through the lens of our own experience threatens days like Mother’s Day—while some have nothing but good to say about their mothers, others have a different memory. Some feel their worth determined by whether they have children or not or by whether things have turned out well with those children. Children today are often seen as something that hampers our ability to live a “normal” life and to achieve our dreams and goals, as chaos that brings out the worst in our well-laid plans for order and fulfillment. Yet, motherhood is part of the created order. The first mandate was for Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply—to fill the earth. So while all are not mothers, all have mothers, and to honor God, we should honor motherhood—thanking God for our own as well as the mothers we know in this room. And while you thank God for the benefit we’ve all received from the mothers in our lives, we should be driven back to the goodness of God in making a way for us to be His own

beloved child under His care. Look to God this morning as Pastor prepares to preach and know the blessing and prayer of Paul as he concludes his letter. 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Praise the Lord for His faithful love to His own!

***Hymn (Powerpoint): For Your Faithfulness**

Message: Energizing Encouragement Eph. 6:21-24 *Hymn #66: To God Be the Glory *Prayer