

The Armor of God
The Lance of Prayer - The Cloak of Zeal - The Garment of Praise

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Battle Ready

Text: Ephesians 6:18

When we talk about the Armor of God, prayer is often mentioned as a passing after thought mostly because there is not a piece of armor attached to it. One of the pieces that the Roman soldier always had in their arsenal was the lance or a **spear**. Like a spear, our prayers arrive to confront the enemy before we do. A spear or a lance carried by a soldier could be longer or shorter depending on its **purpose**. Much like our prayer. Some were meant for thrusting and some were used for hurling at an enemy from a distance.

The lance gave the soldier or the garrison a **tactical** advantage. When an opposing force came to attack an established position, rather than wait for the enemy to get up close, they were able hurl a lance at them from a distance, so they did not have to engage in hand-to-hand combat. If the enemy did break through, they still had an advantage in that a lance kept the enemy at longer than arms-length which made their sword ineffective.

Just as there were many types of lances or spears there are many types of prayers. Paul said, "...praying with **all** prayer and supplication". In the Greek this is better translated as 'all **kinds** of prayer'. There is the prayer of faith, the prayer of agreement, the prayer of supplication, the prayer of petition, the prayer of thanksgiving and united prayer.

The short lance of a Roman soldier was for thrusting at the enemy at close range, this is like the prayer of **faith** filled with authority and urgency. A longer lance that was to be thrown from a distance is like the prayer of **intercession**. This kind of prayer covers our families, business and churches before the enemy can even get in striking distance.

Regardless of how skilled we are when it comes to spiritual conflict, or how bold and courageous we think ourselves to be, we cannot maintain our victorious **position** in Christ without prayer.

Paul says that we are to be praying **always**. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** The word in the Greek for 'always' could be translated – 'at each and every opportunity, every time you get a chance, at every season and every possible moment'. We are to seize every chance we get to pray. Prayer is not optional for a Christian. We are to pray with our understanding, and we are to pray in the Spirit. **1 Corinthians 14:15** Prayer is one of the most underutilized pieces of the armor and yet it is one of the most important.

Six Types of Prayer

The New Testament uses six different Greek words for prayer that are available for our use. Some may say there are more, but they are additional words that have to do with worship.

❖ The Prayer of Consecration

The word most used for prayer in the Greek is the word ‘proseche’. The first part means ‘face to face’. This word is describing intimate relationship. **1 John 1:1**

The second part of the word describes a vow, desire or prayer. A prayer made with deep feeling. A great example is Hannah. **1 Samuel 1:11**

Three key ingredients make up this type of praying – surrender, consecration and thanksgiving. The idea of proseche is – come face to face with God and surrender your life in exchange for His, making consecration an ongoing part of your life and be sure to give Him thanks in advance for moving in your life.

❖ The Prayer of Petition

This is coming to God with our needs and our desires. For many this is all that prayer has become. What this kind of prayer deals with are the basic needs that we must have to make it through our daily lives and to exist. It does not have to do with larger homes and cars. It is a cry from the heart for God’s help, that exposes our own insufficiency to meet our own needs. **Hebrews 5:7, James 5:17**

This type of prayer is one done in humility. It is earnest praying with the awareness of our own inability to do anything significant apart from God. This type of prayer recognizes our complete dependence on God. We need to know that “God meets all of our need according to His riches in Glory”. **2 Corinthians 8:4, 1 Thessalonians 3:10**

❖ The Prayer of Authority

This comes from the Greek word ‘aiteo’. It is used eighty times in the New Testament. It means to ask or demand. This word describes someone who prays authoritatively. This person knows what they need, and they are not afraid to boldly come to God and ask for it. This word does not have to do with spiritual needs but primarily with tangible needs. Things like food, shelter, money and the like. **John 15:7** God says, “if you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask”. To abide means to dwell, lodge, to remain with, to remain in constant union with, or to take up permanent residency.

Many are put off by the idea of this word containing the idea of demanding. This has nothing to do with prideful selfishness and everything to do with confident expectation that comes as a result of relationship. If you and the Holy Spirit are living and doing life together and His Words are in you, then you will be thinking like Him and living and praying according to His will. **1 John 5:14-15, Hebrews 4:16**

God is not offended by bold prayers. Notice that our confidence is used in connection when our ask is directly connected to His will. Remember that when Jesus taught us to pray our first desire was to be “Your Kingdom come; Your will be done”. When we move in the knowledge that we are praying according to His will it gives us a courage and a boldness that is priceless. **James 1:5-6** Much of our doubt is a result of our not knowing if we are praying in the will of God. **1 John 3:22, James 4:3**

❖ The Prayer of Thanksgiving

This is a prayer of swelling gratefulness. In the original language it has to do with a heart that has wonderful feelings and good sentiments that freely flow from a heart that is truly appreciative.

Paul often felt this way when praying for people.

Ephesians 1:15-16, Colossians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:3

Our praise rises from a heart of gratefulness and that heart of praise is cultivated in a life of prayer. When we pray for people, we are to focus on what we appreciate about them even when they have flaws that are disturbing us. We can thank God for answered prayers, thank Him for who He is and thank Him in advance for what He is going to do.

Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

We are to be thankful _____ everything not _____ everything.

❖ The Prayer of Supplication

Many people think of this as intercession or our prayers for other people. The word 'enteuxis' carries the idea of one who comes to God in simple faith. It means to 'fall into or to happen upon'. It carries the idea of falling into the presence of the Lord. To supplicate with the Lord is the idea of two individuals who have discovered each other and fallen in love and are now sharing their lives together. **Revelation 3:20 (NKJV & KJV)**

It is a special time of prayer with God that is intimate, personal and wonderfully life changing.

❖ The Prayer of Intercession

The idea behind this word is only found once in the New Testament. **Romans 8:26**

Notice that the one doing the interceding the one standing in place of is the Holy Spirit and not us. This is not an intercessory work that we do but that the Holy Spirit does. The word intercession means 'to fall in on behalf of someone else'. It is what we would call a word of rescue. If someone fell into some water and we needed to get in there with them in order to get them out and rescue them. The true intercessory work of the Holy Spirit happens when we are at a loss for words and do not know how to pray. Supernaturally the Holy Spirit comes along side of us and joins the prayer. Sometimes this happens as we speak in tongues. Other times He places inside of us the ability to say what needs to be prayed. He feels the emotion and frustration and our inability to know what or how to pray and enables us to boldly go to the Father.

The last two pieces of the Armor of God are not included in the list found in the book of Ephesians but were things I added as I daily learned to pray through the Armor of God.

The Cloak of Zeal - Isaiah 59:17

For the Roman Soldier, the cloak was an important piece of their armor. It could be ornamental, but it was extremely **practical**. It kept a soldier warm in the cold and on guard duty at night. It protected them from the elements like rain and snow and would also double as a blanket. A soldier without his cloak could quickly find himself demotivated and unable to operate at his peak because they were worn down by the elements and unable to rest. We soldiers of Christ will quickly find ourselves unable to operate at *our* peak unless we are fueled by zeal.

For the soldier, a cloak was a symbol of power and **authority**. Its red color identified them as a people who were warriors and well trained. This blood red cape was not worn into battle but as they were marching together. It was an attention grabber and it quickly identified anyone who was wearing one. It also spoke of their intensity and dedication to any task they were given.

Jesus was consumed with zeal **John 2:17** Those with zeal have fervency and dedication. In a word they are **radical**. It is possible to be radical and have knowledge and wisdom. Zeal is dedication and knowledge, mixed with intensity, wisdom and discretion. It is not recklessness.

Romans 10:2

Zeal - is dedication or **enthusiasm** for something. If you have zeal, you are willing, energized, and motivated. Zeal is often used in a religious sense, meaning devotion to God or another religious cause, like being a missionary. Great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective. **Zechariah 8:2, Romans 12:11**

Those with zeal have a **purpose** and believe in what they are doing. We need intelligent radicals. **Romans 10:2-11**

Zeal speaks of **passion**. Passion is the motivation to keep on going. Pray to have a passion for **life**, God, souls, family and the **work** of ministry.

Zeal desires a fresh **anointing** to carry the mantle of Isaiah **61:1-3**

The word mantle is another word for cloak. It is a symbol of the call of God on your life. Before a prophet would receive their cloak, they had to be anointed or commissioned and consecrated for the work God had for their life. It was a sacred call. To be anointed means 'to be covered in'. When a king or a prophet was anointed, the oil was **poured** all over them so that it saturated every part of them. The Cloak is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, His infilling and empowerment and seal of approval over us.

Zeal desires that the **gifts** of the Spirit and His **talents** for your life would be fully evident through His character or "**fruit**" in our lives.

Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

It is the Cloak of Zeal or the Zeal of the Lord that keeps the fire of the Holy Spirit **burning** inside of us. That fire is a Jeremiah anointing. **Jeremiah 20:9**

The Garment of Praise – Isaiah 61:3

This goes on underneath all the armor; it protects from chafing. Life and the battles we face, and the effects of movement can rub us raw and the wrong way. Praise protects us from the normal wear and tear of life and the extreme movement of battle.

Praise, as a garment, is more than a piece of clothing casually thrown over our shoulders. Praise wraps and covers us, leaving no openings through which hostile elements can penetrate. This garment of praise repels and replaces a heavy spirit.

The Garment of praise keeps you from being rubbed the wrong way during battle. It softens the weight of the battle. Praise lifts the spirit of man beyond himself to the presence of God.

Praise combats the mental and emotional toll of warfare. Praise keeps us living the joyful life. **Nehemiah 8:10** Nothing weighs us down like a spirit of heaviness, nothing gives us strength like when we praise God and exchange our weakness for His strength. **Matthew 11:28-30** One of Satan’s tools against us in discouragement. He knows that we are never defeated until we are defeated on the inside. The Garment of Praise guards all the private places that Satan tries to invade and allows us to stay in the presence of God instead of the atmosphere of our own mind.

It helps celebrate the victories before and after the battle.

Like most undergarments, the Garment of Praise is meant to be put on fresh and new daily. Why? Because His mercies are new every morning. Great is HIS faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 Like the song writer said – “morning by morning new mercies I see”.

Praise works like a magnifying glass. It causes what you are focusing on to get bigger, to be “magnified.” David said **Psalms 34:3-4**

It’s a mistake to wait until you have no problems, fewer problems, or your problems are solved before you praise the Lord.

Praise is one of the great scriptural keys to problem solving because it gets your focus on God, the problem Solver.

~Charles Spurgeon said: “My happiest moments are when I am worshipping God, really adoring the Lord Jesus Christ...In that worship I forget the cares of the church and everything else. To me it is the nearest approach to what it will be in heaven.”

God has promised you “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” When we begin to praise Him with a heavy heart, we experience a new sense of hope and joy. Through worship you are reminded that God is bigger than the situations we face, we are reminded that He is not only capable of managing our concerns but willing, wanting, and waiting to.

Psalms 119:164 Don’t just take coffee breaks and tea breaks, take “praise breaks.”

How often do you need to put on the garment of praise? As often as you need to.

God has called us to be warriors and He has equipped us and trained us to be victors.

WE ARE BATTLE READY! Psalms 144:1-2, Psalms 18:34