

# Bible Study: Ephesians

## (Part 6-Chapter 6:18-24)

by Gary T. Panell

Outline: In the first section of this book we spoke of the "Wealth of the believer" (Doctrinal), from chapter 1 through chapter 3. In the second section of the outline, we are looking at the "Walk of the believer" (Practical), starting at chapter 4 and running through chapter 6 and verse 9. In this section we study how we are to walk (or live) in the spirit in our marriage, with our children, and on our job.

In the final section of our outline we will look at the "Warfare of the Believer" (Tactical). This section starts in chapter 6 at verse 10 and runs through verse 24.

### **Chapter 6:18-24**

(18) ...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-

I believe this verse is part of our weaponry. In the military we would often have a dagger in our pant leg. The praying in the Holy Spirit is also spoken of in other places like these verses in Jude. "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." (Jude 20-21) "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. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*" (Romans 8:26-27)

I believe this praying in the Holy Spirit is using our prayer language, and praying with the understanding, otherwise it would just say praying. "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:14-15) Paul said that he prayed more than anyone else in tongues in his private prayer life. "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all." (1 Corinthians 14:18) I have seen the Lord do mighty miracles through prayer in my private devotional life. In fact, I doubt that I would be writing this commentary except for answers to praying in the Spirit. (For this study look at our 1 Corinthians Bible Study-part four.)

Also on prayer here are some thoughts from the book *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill:

"Present-day preaching, with its pale interpretation of divine truths, causes us to mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A sinning man will stop praying, and a praying man will stop sinning.

Prayer is profoundly simple and simply profound. 'Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try,' and yet so sublime that it outranges all speech and exhausts man's vocabulary. A Niagara of burning words does not mean that God is either impressed or moved. One of the most profound of Old Testament intercessors had no language-"Her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." No linguist here! There are "groanings which cannot be uttered."

No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a shop-window to display one's talents; the prayer closet allows no showing off. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.

The two prerequisites to successful Christian living are vision and passion, both of which are born in and maintained by prayer. The ministry of preaching is open to few; the ministry of prayer-the highest ministry of all human office-is open to all. Spiritual adolescents say, 'I'll not go tonight, it's only the prayer meeting.' Whole days and WEEKS have I spent prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer. - George Whitefield."

Before we leave this area of spiritual warfare, I want to say that because we are living in a day when people are seeking to speak to the dead, we are going to be faced with more and more demon possession and oppression. The reason for this is when people seek to speak to "the dead" (spirits of those who passed away) this opens them up to demon activity in their lives. In reality we know from scripture that they are speaking to familiar spirits, in other words demons that have been around these people have information about the person who passed away, so they can imitate these individuals. You might want to read the article we have on [Mediums, Psychics, and Spiritualism](#).

In one of our comments on the Interactive Bible Study we got this note about our article that I just suggested that you read: "[Please stop demonizing spiritualists](#), they don't demonize your faith and beliefs, so please stop doing it to them. It's judging others, lies and ignorance about others that causes conflict in the world, Christ knew that. Thanks xxxx" I was rather glad when I got this note, because it shows that the message is getting out that Mediums, Psychics, and Spiritualists are not of God, even though this individual thinks they are. When I got this note, I got on the internet to get more information on spiritualism, you would be surprised how many "churches" are falling for this sort of delusion. "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron."

(1 Timothy 4:1) "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 1-5)

Books like the *Harry Potter* series, groups like Wicca, and television programs about mediums, and "churches" that are into 'spiritualism" are leading many people into a lifestyle that will lead to problems with demons. (A good book to read on this subject is *Hour of the Witch* by Steve Wohlberg) Scripture says, "...for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived." (Revelation 18:23b) I believe we are

beginning to see these things happen even at this time. The things that happen in the Tribulation do not just happen over night; they are building up before this time.

I believe we are seeing the beginnings of the things that will take place in the Tribulation right now. That is not to say that the Tribulation is going now, but that we are building up to it. "The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

Of course, we know that these things have been happening in countries like India and other countries where people openly worship idols. Now that people are openly speaking to spirits through the use of mediums there will be consequences. So often the consequences are demon possession or demon oppression. Let me say right up front that I do not believe Christians can be possessed, but I do believe they can be oppressed by demons.

The Bible strictly warns us to have nothing to do with witchcraft which is what these things amount to. "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them; I *am* the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:31) "There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, *or* one who interprets omens, *or* a sorcerer, *or* one who conjures spells, *or* a medium, *or* a spiritist, *or* one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD." (Deuteronomy 18: 10-12a) There are those who do offer their children as sacrifices to the devil today, but more often today it is that they sacrifice them to their selfishness by having an abortion.

I am told that there are more Ouija boards sold than Monopoly games, is it any wonder then that Christian leaders are confronted with more and more, out and out spiritual warfare. Then we could speak of the "music" groups that are encouraging the young people to worship Satan: Anthrax, Danzig, Dio, Exodus, Grim Reaper, Helloween, Iron Maiden, Megadeth, Metal Church, and Metallica. These are miscellaneous bands that encourage Satan worship: AC/DC, Celtic Frost, Sam Hain, Satan, Sodom, and Possessed. If you were to ask them about this, they would probably say, "Oh, it is just a joke, we don't really believe what we sing or say." (A good book to read on this is *Satanism, The Seduction of America's Youth* by Bob Larson.) The spiritual world is no joke, and Satan demands a high price for those who would follow him rather than Christ.

K.P. Yohannan director of Gospel for Asia was put up in a motel on one of his many speaking engagements here in the states and this is what he saw: "While settling in, I flipped on the big TV set that dominated the room. What burst on the screen shocked me more than anything I had ever seen in America. There in beautiful color was an attractive woman seated in the lotus position teaching yoga. I watched in horror and amazement as she praised the health benefits of the breathing techniques and other exercises of this Eastern religious practice. What her viewers did not know is that yoga is designed for one purpose only-to open up the mind and body to receive visitations from demon spirits.

"Because this American yogi was dressed in a body suit, claimed a Ph.D. degree and was on educational TV, I assume many of the viewers were deceived into believing this was just another harmless exercise show. But those of us born and raised in nations dominated by the power of darkness know that

hundreds of Eastern religions are marketing themselves in the United States and Canada under innocuous-even scientific-sounding-brand names.

"Mature Christians realize the Bible teaches there are only two religions in this world. There is the worship of the one true God, and there is a false system of demonic alternative invented in ancient Persia. From there, Persian armies and priests spread their faith to India where it took root. Hindu missionaries in turn spread it throughout the rest of Asia. Animism, Buddhism and all other Asian religions have a common heritage in this one religious system. Because many Westerners are unaware of this fact, demonic influences now are able to spread Eastern mysticism in the West through pop culture, rock bands, singers and even university professors. The media have become the new vehicle for the spread of demon worship and idolatry by American gurus.

"In Asia, the religion of Babylon is woven into every waking minute of the day. Without Christ, people live to serve demon spirits. Religion relates to everything, including your name, birth, education, marriage; business deals contracts, travel and death. Because Oriental culture and religion are a mystery, many people in the West are fascinated by it without knowing the power of these demons to blind and enslave their followers. What routinely follows the mystery religions of Babylon are degradation, humiliation, poverty and suffering-even death." (*Revolution in World Missions* by K.P. Yohannan)

A well known Exorcist, Dr. Ken Olson, fights Satan and his demons through praying in the Holy Spirit. He says: "People argue about whether the ministry of exorcism is a special calling of God or a special gift of the Holy Spirit. C. Peter Wagner, in his book *Your Spiritual Gifts*, defines exorcism as a gift of the Holy Spirit. He says it is a gift, 'the special ability that God has given to certain members of the Body of Christ to cast out demons and evil spirits.'

I also believe that exorcism is a call from God and a gift of the Holy Spirit. Without the power and anointing of the Spirit, I would never attempt exorcism. However, I don't believe that God intended to make this an exclusive club. I think He has called many to this ministry, but few have been open to His call.

In Jesus' last words to His followers before He ascended into heaven, He emphasized that ordinary believers should use His authority to cast out demons and lay hands on the sick for healing. He said, 'And those who believe shall use my authority to cast out demons, and they shall speak new languages. They will be able even to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them; and they will be able to place their hands on the sick and heal them.' (Mark 16:17-18, TLB).

### ***Preparing Yourself***

It is as important for the exorcist to be free of sin and clean before God as for the demonized person. On an ongoing basis, I begin each day by putting on the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the breastplate of righteousness referred to in Ephesians 6. I use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to examine my life and prepare me for battle. I want to be certain that there are no sin issues between me and God that would block the flow of the Holy Spirit in the exorcism and healing process.

If an exorcist is haphazard or superficial in preparing a demonized person or himself for the experience of exorcism, he places both himself and his client in jeopardy. Satan is serious about keeping his victims in bondage and we must be equally serious about setting them free.

Place: If at all possible, a church building is the preferred place. If a church isn't available; I use my home or office. I have a tape recorder so I can play praise music, creating a worshipful environment.

Time: I prefer to work during daylight hours. Satan is the prince of darkness, and it is easier to feel oppressed by him at night. For most people, daytime is when they feel most energized, and there is a greater sense of safety in the daylight.

Fasting: In some cases, it may help to fast and pray before an exorcism. Jesus spoke to His apostles of a demon that would not come out 'except by prayer and fasting' (Matthew 17:21). I don't fast just prior to an exorcism, however. I find that I need food, especially protein, for energy, for this is hard work. It is very exhausting and requires an optimum physical condition.

The Team: It is best to have Christians who understand the power of the Holy Spirit working as a team in an exorcism. From just the physical point of view, it helps to have other people to hold the subject when a demonic spirit is fighting. The more powerful demons, which often control people who have been deeply involved in witchcraft and Satanism, can be incredibly strong.

It is also important that the team have a designated leader so that everyone isn't speaking at the same time. A team of people praying loudly can be very disconcerting and disruptive. Team members should know one another, communicate well, and have confidence in each other.

### ***The Love of God***

It is important to realize that authority and power over Satan are not produced by loudly shouting for demons to leave; authority and power are grounded in the victory of Jesus Christ over Satan and the bestowal of His authority on us as believers.

It is easy to get carried away in the heat of the battle. Insensitive exorcists have been known to infect the person being delivered with fear, to the point of terrorizing him or her. Emotionalism, shouting, or any physical abuse against the victim must be strictly avoided. Demons do not leave because of the actions of our carnal nature. They leave because we enforce the authority of Christ under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

In a successful exorcism, the love of God is uppermost in the minds of the ministry team and can be felt by the person being set free. Kindness and gentleness, the laying on of hands in prayer for healing, even a hug at appropriate times (with the permission of the client), can best express the unconditional love of God so needed by the suffering victim of Satan's cruelty.

God's love is the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit and is wonderful for healing. It enables a minister to accept and love a demonized person, and the ultimate victory is always because of the power of God's love in action.

### ***Two key questions***

I ask my client two key questions before we begin. First, 'Do you want to be healed?' "Most people will quickly say, 'Yes.' The next question is perhaps more important: 'Do you believe you can be healed?' There may be hesitation, doubt, guilt, and the fear that he or she is not worthy of being healed. It is important to deal with the problem of unworthiness before the exorcism beings. When I discover negative words implanted from childhood, I pray to break the power of those words by the authority of Jesus."

### ***Physical Sensations***

"A demonized person should be prepared for the physical sensations that sometimes accompany an exorcism. There may be feelings of nausea and actual vomiting. Sometimes demons exit through a mass of phlegm or mucous expelled through the mouth. It helps to keep on hand some tissues, a clean, dry towel, and a wastebasket or pail, which we sometimes jokingly call a 'demon bucket.' In the midst of so serious a process, it's helpful to have some occasional comic relief.

"I also explain that there may be sharp pains in the heart, head, or places where there was a physical injury in the past. Sometimes a strong choking sensation comes upon the victim. I ask him to let me know immediately of these things, and I anoint the area with oil and pray against the pain." [One time when evangelist K.K. from Trinidad and myself were praying for a demon possessed person the demons tried to choke us, that was the first time I raised my hands as I can remember, the demons took their hands off of us when we pleaded the blood of Christ.] \*(My own comments, Gary Panell)

[Certain aids are necessary, a Bible, love for the person, the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His blood. Rebuke Satan or the demon in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remind them of the blood of Jesus and Judgment to come. Speak to the demon when it speaks. Don't listen to its lies, or intimidation, he is a cheat and a liar. When we were helping cast out a demon it said that it would kill the girl's unborn child in the womb, but we rebuked the demon and said we claim this baby in the name of Jesus. We have the picture of this baby that was born after she was delivered! A cross and the Holy Communion, and anointing oil are important to have present.] \*(These are my comments, G. T. Panell)

Intercessors: I have been blessed with people who pray for me.

Exorcism begins with a time of prayer. This is a sample of the kind of prayer I pray: I take authority in the name of Jesus Christ over this room and cast out all demons in this room. I seal this room with the blood of Jesus. I plead the blood of Jesus over every person in this room and in this neighborhood.

I take authority over the demonic spirits in the air above this room and the ground beneath this office in the name of Jesus Christ. I bind all demons from hell that would come against us and refuse them entrance. In Jesus Christ's name I bind the forces of Satan in fire, water, and nature.

I ask you, Heavenly Father, to send your warrior angels to do battle in the heavens and come against all the principalities and powers and rulers of darkness who would interfere with us. I also ask, Father, for warrior angels to come to this room to prevent violence from demonic spirits. Let angels link arms around this building, and prevent all communication and calls for help between demons in this person and demons in other places.

I know that angels protect and assist me. Recently a demon tried to kill a woman who had run out of my office and attempted to jump a second-story railing. As we raced to help, I feared we would find her body on the concrete below, but something had already intervened. She said with a tremble, 'That was a powerful force that stopped me.' Those angels' hands are huge!

### **Anointing for Healing**

After prayer I anoint the demonized person's head with oil in the sign of the Cross in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I place my hands lightly on the head and pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit for all present.

Since I know from previous interviews the areas of woundedness in the person's life, I begin to pray for inner healing of those memories and emotions. I accomplish as much inner healing as possible, because demons' claws can't attach to areas that are healed.

### **Binding the Strong Man**

As I am praying, demons often begin to stir, so I keep checking with the person to see what is going on inside. I ask him to look in my eyes. I tell him that what I am about to say is not directed at him, but at the strong man, the ruling demon inside. Then I speak to the demon forces:

I take authority in the name of Jesus Christ and bind the strong man within from the conscious mind of this person, from the subconscious mind, memories, spirit, and soul, and from the will and body. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke and pray against the influence of all ancestral demons from his mother's and father's families.

The eyes of a victim change when a demon manifests itself. They take on a wild, hateful look as I command the demon to look into my eyes for a confrontation. The war has begun.

Some exorcists believe in the importance of discovering the strong man's name. They command the demon within to name himself. The problem with this is that demons so often lie. The key to finding out which demon is most powerful in a person's life is to examine the emotional problems he has presented. Expect a demon of rejection for someone who has been wounded deeply by rejection. If a person is suicidal, bind and cast out demons of suicide, death, and self-destruction. If a subject has been sexually abused, no doubt there will be demonic spirits of lust, incest, sexual perversion, and shame. There may also be the spirit of fear-fear of men or women and fear of sex. In working with former Satanists and witches, I have found that the strong man is very proud and will give his name.

Under each strong man there are other powerful demons that must be detected and cast out. I read aloud the authority Scriptures that I've used in preparing the client, such as Luke 10:19, Mark 16:17, and Matthew 16:19. The authority of the name of Jesus is powerful over Satan and his demons:

'Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11) [The demons may try to confuse you, mock you, blaspheme Jesus and everything. They may try to bite, hit, scream,

curse, etc. just expect this and continue to rebuke in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and His blood.] (\*Gary Panell's comments)

### **Physical Pain**

During inner healing or exorcism often the victim feels physical pain associated with the memories of abuse or injury, a phenomenon I call 'body memories.' The pain is very real to the victim, and it is necessary to anoint the areas of pain with oil in the sign of the Cross, asking the Father to erase those memories and stop the physical pain. Then I bind all demons associated with those memories.

### **How Demons Leave**

Demons most often leave a person through coughing, coughing up phlegm, deep burping of gas like bubbles, or screaming. But sometimes they leave silently. I check to see whether a victim's stomach is upset, and tell him not to hold back if it is. They most often have sensations of a presence in the stomach, which moves up the esophagus to the mouth. There are times when the demon blocks the throat, causing a choking sensation. I anoint the area with oil. I may ask the person to say, 'I cough you out in the name of Jesus Christ.' This helps him or her to be less passive in the exorcism process. Sometimes demons will leave quietly with no manifestation of their departure. Some people have reported demonic spirits leaving through the fingertips, eyes, nose, and other parts of the body.

### **The Aftermath**

After the demons have been expelled, the person feels exhausted. I pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit and His healing presence. Although a number of demons have left and the person feels better, there may be, and often are, more demons remaining. In fact, it's usually the most powerful ones who stay behind. This time of peaceful rest may be the best time to end the session until another day. Because I have learned God was watching my clients long before I ever met them, I know I can trust Him to care for them until the next time.

Remember, inner healing and exorcism are a process that often takes repeated session. Prematurely claiming a complete victory 'by faith' can be very damaging if all the demons are not truly gone. A good exorcist will be committed to see the process through until the end, no matter how many sessions it takes. [You might say, "But Jesus and the disciples seemed to cast them out right away." Christ, yes, but the disciples could not get victory over the demons immediately always. Study all the Scriptures on this again, and then realize that there may be some demons today that will not come out unless we fast and pray more!] (\*Gary Panell)

### **Games Demons Play**

Demons often try to make their victims sleepy or passive or put them in a trancelike state. The spirit of passivity is a powerful, deceptive spirit, and I confront it strongly and cast it out quickly if I detect its presence.

There are times demons want to talk, to tell the exorcist, 'You don't have enough power,' and the like. I refuse to get involved with conversations with a demon, because it gives them the opportunity to manipulate the exorcism process.



Sometimes a powerful demon will put on a show of power with bizarre manifestations to try to impress, distract, or frighten the exorcist. The intent is to divert the team from the central purpose of casting out the demons. I take authority over this spirit and its games, and bind it from communicating with the realm of darkness outside, attempting to call in reinforcements.

[Sometimes people who are demon possessed will distract in a worship service as to stop the worship of Jesus. We found that it is wrong to stop the service and have everyone pray for them, that is what Satan wants. Satan wants to stop the worship of Jesus from continuing. What is best, we found, is to take the demon possessed person out of the service. Have elders go with them to pray for deliverance, and the congregation have a short prayer and go back to worshipping the Lord, and teaching the Word.] (\*Gary Panell)

Demons lie to their victims. They say that if they leave, the person will suffer terribly. They misuse Scriptures, such as the words of the apostle Paul, 'I have been crucified with Christ' (Galatians 2:20), to frighten and confuse. They whisper, 'If I leave, you will be nailed like Jesus was on a cross, so it is better to let me stay than for you to go on with God.' Believe it or not, these encounters can be serious times of testing for victims. Although they will not endure a physical crucifixion, it is true that the Christian life is not an easy one and in it there is an element of cross bearing.

### ***Other Problems***

If everything has been tried and demons still refuse to leave, it's important to go back over preparatory ground to see if anything was missed. Demons may be able to maintain a foothold for these reason: [In my opinion Christians cannot be possessed, but they can be oppressed, I have even seen where they could cause pain in the head, ears, etc, and even so much as us the vocal cords of a Christian to speak through them. The one I heard do this would say things like: "I can't get down in there, that Man is down there (speaking disrespectfully of Christ's Holy Spirit in the Christian)." This happened because this girl was weak in the Lord, being a new Christian, and having had demons cast out of her. She became frightened one night, and instead of taking the sword of the Spirit she gave in. She should have held her ground and used Scripture to fight back by faith.] (\*Gary Panell)

- Unconfessed sin
- Unrenounced occult activity.
- Unwillingness to surrender to the Lordship of Christ. For instance, a person with a demon of lust may be reluctant to give it up for fear of losing the passion of his or her sex life.
- Unforgiveness.
- Uncompleted inner healing of damaged emotions and memories.
- Inner vows that haven't been revealed and broken.
- Lack of faith. Faith is not a feeling of confidence that healing will take place, but a commitment of the will to believe God's Word that healing is indeed possible.
- Tacit agreements. A tacit agreement is a spoken or unspoken statement that implies a legal contract with demonic forces. Satan is a legalist, and he will try to enforce any implied agreement. "I wish I was dead," is a tacit agreement with the spirit of hopelessness and despair. "My life will never be any different," becomes a tacit agreement with the spirit of resignation. (I confront the person with these statements and ask him to renounce them in Jesus' name.
- Failure of the exorcist to continue to victory. Some exorcists feel that after two or three sessions they have done all they can. They won't commit to spend whatever time is needed to complete the healing.

- Failure of the demonized person to break emotional ties to ungodly relationships of the past, such as former sexual partners or friends who are still involved in occult practices.

I just love to see the transformation in people's lives-their eyes shine, their faces glow, and there is a joy that comes from God, because, as the song says, 'our God reigns.' Jesus Christ has set the captives free, and again Satan is defeated! There is no satisfaction for an exorcist so great as the Spirit-filled life of a person set free to love and serve the Lord. (*EXORCISM Fact or Fiction?* by Dr. Ken Olson)

You see it is high time that we as Christians see Christ and the Church for what they really are: We are not going to lose in this battle we are going to be victorious, oh yes, there will be Christians that are killed (martyred), there will be battles that will be lost, but the war will be won. You see it is not as if we are standing cowering waiting for the next attack from Satan. Far from it, we are given the armor to take the battle into the "enemies' territory!" One of my most favorite stories in the Old Testament is of King Saul's son Jonathan. "Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, 'Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.'

...Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor bearer, and said, 'Come up to us, and we will show you something.' Jonathan said to his armor bearer, 'Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.' And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armor bearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armor bearer killed them. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling. Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there." (1 Samuel 14: 1-16)

You see just like in casting out demons from a person there is a warfare going on. The demon will mock us and try to intimidate us, but that is just a bluff because they know what will happen if Christians really put on the Spiritual armor and go after Satan. They know that the blood of Christ is victorious, the question is do we believe this?!

You see Christians confuse what is going to happen in prophecy during the Tribulation time with what is going to happen in the Church Age. Then there are Christians teaching that there is no difference between God's dealings with Israel and His dealing with us. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Church will go out to meet the LORD victoriously as we say in chapter five. Satan will not have the chance he needs to get the upper hand until the Church is raptured out of this world. "And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming." (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8)

I believe that brother K.P. Yohannan, Founder & President of *Gospel for Asia* has the right idea about missions. He is training leaders through the children of India and China to reach the coming generations. We are speaking of more than two billion people. He believes the Church has not been affective in Asia

because of the approach in the past. We have done many good works in these countries, but what these countries and others like them need is the preaching and teaching of the word of God, and the establishing of churches by nationals. Christians can help by financing this work, but that the establishment of the churches in these countries has to be done by nationals.

He does not look at the Church, like so many have looked at it in the past, as being a failure, but as the Church, being victorious over the works of the devil! We will win the war Christians, victory is Christ's as we believe (trust) Him to be victorious through us like He was through Jonathan. Jonathan did not say we can't do it, we don't have enough workers, or enough finances, etc. He said, "For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few." "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5)

### ***Brick Kiln Sunday School Teacher***

"Twenty-two-year-old Esther Bibi (not her real name) was called to build God's kingdom at the brick kilns. Shortly after completing high school, she started a house church with 10 Christian families at the brick kiln where she worked and lived. Some Muslims willingly attended the house church, and every Sunday, at 9:00 a.m., she and a local pastor would lead a Bible study. Esther also held evening prayer services attended by many Muslim students. Most expressed interest in learning about the miracles of Jesus Christ.

"Four times the brick kiln owner warned Esther to stop holding prayer meetings and Bible studies at the brick kilns. He didn't like her sharing the gospel with Muslims. Each time Esther refused to halt her evangelistic activities. Last July as she was preparing 14 candidates for baptism, the brick kiln owner stormed into the Bible study and ordered the Muslim students to disperse. Esther says he slapped her face, grabbed her Bible and tossed it on the couch. 'I've told you many times to stop the prayer meetings because you are distracting the Muslim students!' he shouted.

"Esther explained Muslims attended the Bible study voluntarily. "They take interest because I teach about the God who was, is and will live forever. I do not force them to attend." Two months later the brick kiln owner attacked Esther once again. This time he told her he would teach her a lesson because she was praying for the sick and teaching Muslims about Jesus. He abducted her and then beat and raped her.

"Despite her suffering, Esther remains firm in her Christian faith. She says she will continue to share the gospel with Pakistani non-believers. Her favorite Scripture verse is John 15:1, where Jesus said. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser." Esther believes she is called to bear fruit and reap a bountiful harvest for Christ. But as a disciple of Jesus, she knows there is a price to pay. She knows she is called not only to believe, but also to suffer for Him (Philippians 1:29).

### ***Family Division***

"Then there is another true story that took place recently: Jesus tells us He did not come to bring peace to earth but division. [During the Church Age and Tribulation] That's because when we come to know Him, love Him and follow Him, we are at odds with those who do not. He told us families will be divided

against each other, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother (Luke 12:53). This is the experience of most Pakistani Muslims when they accept Christ.

"Twenty-eight-year-old Mohammed (not his real name) stared down his cousins as they pointed two pistols at his head. They ordered him into their Land Cruiser and drove for nearly three hours. Mohammed knew why they were kidnapping him: They learned he had converted from Islam to Christianity. Family members had warned Mohammed several times they would kill him if he did not return to Islam. Was this it? Were his cousins about to murder him and dump his body in a canal or ravine? Mohammed prayed: "Lord, You are my shepherd...My life is in Your hands...Save me from these people...If not, I will be with You in heaven."

"Mohammed's life was spared at that time, but he was locked in a room for 10 days. When his cousins returned, they asked if he was ready to become a Muslim again. "I told them if they could prove Jesus was not the Son of God, then I would return to Islam," explained Mohammed. The two men were infuriated at Mohammed's response. They slapped and beat him and left him alone for three more days. He was given no food or water. Despite suffering from hunger and dehydration, Mohammed was filled with peace and came to realize God was testing his newfound Christian faith.

"On the fourth day, Mohammed's cousins returned and removed him from the room. They took him outside and chained his feet to a stake. He was left in the hot sun for six hours without water to drink. When he demanded something to quench his thirst, he was handed a clay pot filled with urine. Mohammed protested the harsh treatment, and his cousins threw the urine in his face. "I thought about Jesus and how His persecutors spit on His face."

"The next day, Mohammed's captors again demanded he renounce Christ and return to Islam. They threatened to cut off his body parts one by one. He was deprived of sleep and was hung upside down by his feet until he passed out. During each new inhumane act, the cousins demanded Mohammed return to Islam. Each time he refused to yield. "I told them Jesus is the Son of God and was raised from the dead," explained Mohammed. "No one can do that except God."

"Another cousin arrived and attempted to persuade Mohammed to renounce his faith. Mohammed says this cousin was a police inspector skilled in various torture techniques. Mohammed was taken to a private, illegal jail cell where for one month, his feet and knees were beaten repeatedly with sticks. He was also subjected to numerous "unmentionable" torturous acts. Mohammed's sister eventually raised enough money to pay a bribe to some local people who freed him from the secret torture cell.

"A VOM worker learned of Mohammed's persecution and provided him with a safe haven. He is currently in hiding and is preparing to join evangelists working with Muslims in another area of Pakistan." (*The Voice of the Martyrs*, March 2006)

Christian brother or sister in Christ this persecution is happening in our time in many parts of the world, what are we willing to give up for this spiritual war that is going on. What are we willing to invest in the souls of men, women, and children that are dying around the world without Christ?

Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follower of the Lamb,

And shall I fear to own His cause,  
Or blush to speak His Name?

Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face\*?  
Must I not stem the flood?  
Is this vile world a friend to grace,  
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight, if I would reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord.  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war  
Shall conquer, though they die;  
They see the triumph from afar,  
By faith they bring it nigh.

When that illustrious day shall rise,  
And all Thy armies shine  
In robes of victory through skies,  
The glory shall be Thine.  
Isaac Watts, Am I a Soldier of the Cross?

I would like to end this section on the armor with this story from C.T. Studd. "He was the famous British athlete and founder of *Worldwide Evangelization Crusade*. He was one who gave up all his achievements in this life for Christ's sake. He was challenged to his commitment by an article written by an atheist. That article in part said: 'If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, then religion would mean to me everything.

"I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labor in its cause alone.

"I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering.

"Earthly consequences would never stay my hand, or seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon eternity alone, and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable.

"I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be: 'WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?'" (*Revolution in World Missions* by K.P. Yohannan)

I was impressed with the American fighting soldiers when I was in the Army, and I am impressed with them today as I see them in the news. One of the most important things they have going for them is that they are dedicated to the cause, and they give it their all. Would to God that we as "Christian Soldiers" would do the same!

Before we leave this section on spiritual warfare I found this quote: "The focus of all spiritual warfare is ultimately the opening of doors so that the ministry of the gospel may be advanced." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*) "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." (Colossians 4:2-4) "For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." (1 Corinthians 16:9) The reason Satan fights us so hard is because he does not want to lose any more of his people to Christ. The reason we fight so hard, in the spirit, is to reach them for Christ!

(19) ...and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

If we are going to be victorious in this spiritual walk and witness we need to be praying for others and having them pray for us!

The reason we do not have revival today in the Church and in the world I truly believe is because we are not praying as we should, and I include myself in this. Paul taught us to pray if we are to open our "mouths boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel."

Here are some quotes from Leonard Ravenhill's book *Why Revival Tarries*.

"Men of prayer must be men of steel, for they will be assaulted by Satan even before they attempt to assault his kingdom."

"Prayer is no substitute for work; equally true is it that work is no substitute for prayer."

"With every possible guile that he knows, the devil would snatch us from the closet of prayer. For in prayer man is linked with God, and in that union Satan is baffled and beaten. Well he knows this; and so, if the closet is shut tightly, the mind is invaded with legitimate cares or with imagination as big or more real than life. Here we need to plead our main defense—the blood. Another useful way to offset wandering thoughts and to be in concentration is to pray audibly or to give some utterance at least, though it need not be loud."

"Prayer is our secret weapon. We do not conquer Satan by prayer; Christ conquered him two thousand years ago. Satan fools and feints, blows and bluffs, and we so often take his threats to heart and forget "the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward." The Master Prayerer said, "I give you power over all the power of the enemy." That is the victory. The soul is drawn out in prayer. True prayer is a time-eater. In the elementary stages, the clock seems to drag; later, as the soul gets used to the holy exercise,

time flies when we pray. Prayer makes the soul tender. Notice, we never pray for folks we gossip about, and we never gossip about the folk for whom we pray!"

"Satan would have us increase even in Bible knowledge, I believe, as long as we keep from prayer, which is the exercise of the instruction we have received through the Word. What use is deeper knowledge if we have shallower hearts? What use is greater standing with men if we have less standing with God? What use is personal physical hygiene if we have filthiness of mind and of the spirit? What use is religious piety if we have soul carnality? Why strut with physical strength if we have spiritual weakness? Of what use is worldly wealth if we have spiritual poverty? Who can take comfort in social popularity if he is unknown in hell? Prayer takes care of all these spiritual maladjustments."

For lovers love to be alone and the high peaks of the soul are reached in solitude. The poet says, "I heard a call, 'Come follow,' That was all. Earth's joys grew dim, My soul went after Him, I rose and followed- That was all. Will you not follow if you hear His call?"

Could a mariner sit idle if he heard the drowning cry?  
Could a doctor sit in comfort and just let his patients die?  
Could a fireman sit idle, let men burn and give no heed?  
Can you sit at ease in Zion with the world around you DAMNED? -Leonard Ravenhill

Give me the love that leads the way,  
The faith that nothing can dismay,  
The hope no disappointment tire,  
The passion that will burn like fire,  
Let me not sink to be a clod:  
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God. -Amy Wilson Carmichael

AMERICA cannot fall-because she is already fallen! This goes for Britain, too. She cannot go into slavery-because her people are fettered at the moment in the chains of self-forged, self-chosen moral anarchy. Here are millions, diseased morally, with no longing for healing. Here are men paying for shadows at the price of their immortal souls, men who not only reject the Substance, but who openly sneer at and caricature it.

Never before have men in the masses sold their souls to the devil at such bargain prices.

One of the signs of "the last days" is that "men are lovers of pleasures." (Note that it is in the plural.) And where is hell's broth stewed? In the breweries of the world. Breweries are maternity clinics that breed men-slayers operating with guns, and men driving on the highways while drunken. Courts deal with the fruit of liquor; revival would slay this deadly tree at the roots.

The mad merry-go-round of sensuality is filled with millions awaiting their turn for initiation into iniquity. When wrong is so sweet a morsel, the sinsoaked, sex-lain youth could not care less about doing right. One crowded hour of glorious "life"-so they argue-is worth a gamble on the speculation of the theologians' so-called "eternity."

Loaded with lechery, gutted with gambling, damned in drink, such men (who are adult in body, but moral imbeciles) whine out Lord Byron's lament:

"I now have ashes where once I had fire,  
The soul in my body is dead;  
The thing I once loved, I now merely admire,  
My heart is as gray as my head."

If we wept as much in the prayer closet as devout Jews have done at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, we would now be enjoying a prevailing, purging revival! If we would return to apostolic practice-waiting upon the Lord for apostolic power-we could then go forth to apostolic possibilities! This is the hour when we are asked over and over again, "Is everybody happy?" God's purpose for us is not happiness, but holiness!

We surely need again to climb Calvary's hill on our knees, to survey the wondrous Cross in an attitude of humiliation and adoration. The Church must first repent; then the world will break! The Church must first weep; then our altars will be filled with weeping penitents.

The Church that is man-managed instead of God-governed is doomed to failure. A ministry that is college-trained but not Spirit-filled works no miracles. -Samuel Chadwick

The man whose little sermon is "repent" sets himself against his age, and will for the time being be battered mercilessly by the age whose moral tone he challenges. There is but one end for such a man-"off with his head!" You had better not try to preach repentance until you have pledged your head to heaven. -Joseph Parker

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke 6:26)

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

Today we seem much more interested in having churches air-conditioned than prayer-conditioned.

Because the Church has lost Holy Ghost fire, millions go to hell-fire.

The "old nature" may dodge the water baptism, but it is destroyed in the fire baptism, for He shall "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Until they were fire-purged, the miracle-working disciples who beheld His resurrection glory, were held back from ministering the Cross.

"But can there be an earthquake without sensation? Or a tornado without disorder? Did Wesley's scorching ministry cause no upheaval? The Church in England slammed every door in the face of a man sent from God whose name was John"-Wesley, but these "religious Canutes" did not keep back the tide of Holy Ghost revival.

This blessed man, Wesley, went away from Oxford University, having "failed completely," conspicuously is his own word (even with the brain of a scholar, the fire of a zealot, and the tongue of an orator), to lead others to the Lamb. Then came May the 24th, 1738, when John Wesley at an Aldersgate Street prayer meeting was born of the Spirit; later he was filled with the Spirit. In thirteen years this fire-baptized man shook three kingdoms. And Savonarola shook Florence in central Italy until the face of "the mad monk" became a terror to the Florentines of his day, and a thing of derision to the religionists.



Brethren, in the light of the "bema seat," we had better live six months with a volcanic heart, denouncing sin in places high and low and turning the nation from the power of Satan unto God (as John the Baptist did) rather than die loaded with ecclesiastical honors and theological degrees and be the laughing stock of hell and spiritual nonentities.

Let me burn out for God. After all, whatever God may appoint, prayer is the great thing. Oh, that I may be a man of prayer! -Henry Martyn

O for a passionate passion for souls,  
O for a pity that yearns!  
O for the love that loves unto death,  
O for the fire that burns!  
O for the pure prayer-power that prevails,  
That pours itself out for the lost!  
Victorious prayer in the Conqueror's Name,  
O for a PENTECOST -Amy Wilson Carmichael

Though to Paul, the proud, law-keeping Pharisee of colossal intellect and boasted pedigree, Christ made a challenge on the Damascus road, it needed his three years in Arabia for emptying and unlearning before he could say, "God revealed Himself in me." God can fill in a moment what may take years to empty. Hallelujah!

At the very doors of our churches are the masses-unwon because they are unreached, unreached because they are unloved. Thank God for all that is being done for missions overseas. Yet it is strangely true that we can get more "apparent" concern for people across the world than for our perishing neighbors across the street!

Oh God, give this perishing generation ten thousand John the Baptists-to tear away the bandages put over our national and international sins by politicians and moralists!

Repentance is a change of mind about God, about sin, and about hell!

The primary qualification for a missionary is not love for souls, as we so often hear, but love for Christ. - Vance Havner

Apostolic preaching is not marked by its beautiful diction, or literary polish, or cleverness of expression, but operates "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." -Arthur Wallis

The law of prayer is the law of harvest: sow sparingly in prayer, reap sparingly; sow bountifully in prayer, reap bountifully. The trouble is we are trying to get from our efforts what we never put into them.

Oh! For a heart that is burdened!  
Infused with a passion to pray;  
Oh! For a stirring within me;  
Oh! For His power every day.  
Oh! For a heart like my Savior,  
Who, being in an agony, prayed.

Such caring for OTHERS, Lord, give me;  
On my heart let burdens be laid.  
My Father, I long for this passion,  
To pour myself out for the lost-  
To lay down my life to save others-  
"To pray," whatever the cost.  
Lord, teach me, Oh teach me this secret,  
I'm hungry this lesson to learn,  
This passionate passion for others,  
For this, blessed Jesus, I yearn.  
Father, this lesson I long for from Thee-  
Oh, let Thy Spirit reveal this to me. -Mary Warburton Booth

O brother, pray; in spite of Satan, pray; spend hours in prayer; rather neglect friends than not pray; rather fast, and lose breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper-and sleep too-than not pray. And we must not talk about prayer, we must pray in right earnest. The Lord is near. He comes softly while the virgins slumber. -Andrew A. Bonar

It was seven years  
before Carey baptized his first convert in India  
before Judson won his first disciple in Burmah.  
that Morrison toiled before the first Chinaman was brought to Christ.  
declares Moffat, that he waited to see the first evident moving of the Holy Spirit  
upon his Bechuanas of Africa.  
before Henry Richards wrought the first convert, gained at Banza Manteka. -A .J. Gordon

Prayer-the soul's blood. -George Herbert

We are suffering today from a plague of ministers who are more concerned that their heads should be filled than that their hearts be fired.

The Spirit-filled believer will hate iniquity, injustice and impurity; and he will militate against all of them. Because Paul hated the world, the world hated Paul. We, too, need this disposition of opposition.

A Christian, dreaming before his television night by night, has a dead brain and a bankrupt soul. Paul declares."The world is crucified unto me."

Revival is no more a miracle than a crop of wheat.

Revival comes from heaven when heroic souls enter the conflict determined to win or die-or if need be, to win and die! "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." -Charles G. Finney

God's cause is committed to men; God commits Himself to men. Praying men are the vice-regents of God; they do His work and carry out His plans. -E. M. Bounds

Prayer is the sovereign remedy. -Robert Hall

Prayer is the acid test of devotion. -Samuel Chadwick

Just as in atomic energy, modern scientists have touched a new dimension of power, so the Church has to rediscover the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit.

Henry Martyn died this: "My present deadness I attribute to want of sufficient time and tranquility for private devotion. Oh that Al might be a man of prayer!" A writer of old said, "Much of our praying is like the boy who rings the door bell, but then runs away before the door is opened." Of this we are sure: The greatest undiscovered area in the resources of God is the place of prayer. [!!!!!!!!!!!!!!]

Prayer is as vast as God because He is behind it. Prayer is as mighty as God, because He has committed Himself to answer it.

At the judgment seat [Bema Seat of Christ, not the Great White Throne] the most embarrassing thing the believer will face will be the smallness of his/her praying.

David Livingstone prayed, "Lord, when will the wound of this world's sin be healed?" Livingstone lived in prayer, and literally died upon his knees in prayer.

For this sin-hungry age we need a prayer-hungry Church. We need to explore again the "exceeding great and precious promises of God." In "that great day," the fire of judgment is going to test the sort, not the size of the work we have done. That which is born in prayer will survive the test. Prayer does business with God. Prayer creates hunger for souls; hunger for souls creates prayer. The understanding soul prays; the praying soul gets understanding. To the soul who prays in self-owned weakness, the Lord gives His strength. Oh that we were men of like prayer as Elijah-a man subject to like passions as we are! Lord, let us pray!

"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19)

Lord, even demons are subject unto us in Thy name. -The Seventy

Do you still wonder why a demon said, "And Paul I know?" I don't.

(20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

We are ambassador for Christ in this world. Our citizenship is in heaven, but we are allowed to stay here on earth a while longer to represent our King Jesus Christ. "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20) Someone has said you are either a missionary or you are a mission field. You are in one camp or the other. If you are saved then you represent the King of Kings in this world wherever you are.

Paul was in prison as we talked about in the introduction of the book, but that did not stop him from ministering for the Lord. If anything it enhanced his ministry, as hard as that may seem. You see we look at events in our life from earth's perspective, but God has a different perspective. "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" (Isaiah 55:5-9)

When we see Christians being persecuted we think this is terrible, and in a sense it is, but since God has allowed it, there is a reason for it now. At the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12)

Often persecution is a testimony to others about how much our faith means to us. One prisoner for the Lord that I read about recently was rejoicing that he was put into jail because he had led 40 other prisoners to the Lord. Look at John Bunyan of Pilgrim's Progress he spent 12 years in jail in England for preaching outside the church building. However, during this time in prison the Pilgrim's Progress dream came to him. How many people have been won to the Lord through this story, we will never know until we get to heaven. Sure this was hard on his family, but God allowed it for a purpose.

Sometimes God delivers like He did in the case of the three Hebrew "children" in the fiery furnace. Then other times He allows us to go through persecution and even death for Him, but it all has a purpose. Look at the five missionary martyrs in Ecuador, I was a child when this took place, and we were thinking what a tragedy! Now how many years later thousands of Indians have been won to the Lord by the wives of those that were killed? Thousands of others of us around the world have dedicated our lives to serve the Lord at any cost like the five martyrs.

I have met those Christians that are teaching that if we have enough faith we will not need to be persecuted. They say of men like Stephen that was stoned with the help of Paul before he was saved, "If only he had had enough faith, he would not have had to die." This is "poppy cock" excuse my language, but this is not the teaching of God's word. The Lord Jesus stood up in heaven when Stephen was being stoned! He was in the center of God's will for his life, and death! Even to this day do we read of his courage and devotion to the Lord and know he did the right thing by preaching the gospel at any cost, even the cost of his life!

Hebrews 11 makes it perfectly clear that God does deliver, nothing is too hard for Him, but other times He allows believers to go through horrible things for His name sake!

They will be rewarded in heaven, and souls will be saved here, more than would have been if they had lived. Don't take my word for it look at these verses: "Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith." (Hebrews 11:35-39a)

Paul wanted to speak out boldly for the Lord as he said, "...as I ought to speak."

(21) But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;

This is one of the few personal references in the letter. Tychicus was evidently the letter carrier. "Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me." (Colossians 4:7)

(22) ...whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Paul wants everyone in the churches to know how he is doing, and he is concerned about them.

(23) Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only Christ can answer this prayer for us. Notice that this is the theme of John as well, the love of the brethren for one another. If we have love from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ we will have peace. I like what some churches do for a greeting they say, "The peace of Christ to you." This is, of course very scriptural as we see here.

(24) Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

We always know it is Paul writing because he has similar openings and closing. What a wonderful word to close on for the Church as well. "Grace be with you true believers!"

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