

# Message 26: Pray, Encourage, Love

6.11.23

Message 26

Ephesians Series

Ephesians 6:18–20 (CSB)

**18** Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. **19** Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. **20** For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

Ephesians 6:21–24 (CSB)

**21** Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me so that you may be informed. **22** I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.

**23** Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Introduction: Here ends Paul's letter to Ephesus.](#)

A. Ephesus had a unique place in Paul's life.

1. He spent 3 years ministering in this city.
2. The younger pastor, Timothy, was the pastor, and they shared a special relationship.
3. It shouldn't surprise us to realize that Paul had a love and affection for the Christians in Ephesus.
  - a. Paul's Apostleship was marked by a genuine love for people.

b. Even today, God's ministers should be characterized by a love for God's people.

B. Because of Paul's love for the Ephesians, he does not entrust this letter to just anyone.

1. Tychicus was a man who had become a trusted partner.
2. He was the letter-bearer, responsible for the safe delivery of the letter and the conveying of Paul's love for the believers, his condition, and other updates.
3. It is likely that Tychicus carried the letter of Colossians also, and perhaps traveled with Onesimus, who was the subject of the letter to Philemon.<sup>i</sup>
  - a. Because Paul was in prison, he had to depend upon others to share in his ministry.
  - b. Thankfully, Paul didn't have to create a network of co-laborers at the last minute.
  - c. He had been intentionally investing in people all along, and here in a time of need, Paul was able to entrust this important work to capable people.

C. The necessity of doing life, ministry, and spiritual warfare together is evident in the last sentences of Ephesians.

1. As we finalize this series of messages from Ephesians, I want to encourage us to pray for each other, for our community, and for those not yet known.
2. As we live and engage in spiritual warfare, we must remain committed to Jesus AND each other.
  - a. We can't do this any other way.
  - b. Love God, Love others.

What does Paul say in his last words?

## 1. Stay alert with all perseverance and Intercession for all the saints.

A. We must Pray in the Spirit on all occasions for our own safety and for others.

1. It seems cliché, but prayer really is an act of service.
2. Often, when we reach out to people to help, many will say, "Just pray for me."
  - a. But part of me wants to do more than that.
  - b. I want to do something "meaningful".
  - c. I want to be hands-on.
  - d. But truthfully, often times the best way we can serve is to pray for people meaningfully.

B. Why pray for others?

1. Your prayers may keep people alive.
2. Your prayers may keep people safe.
3. Your prayers may be a conduit for God's provision.

C. We need people praying for us.

1. The Apostle Paul was never shy about asking the churches to pray for him.
2. Why, then, are we shy about asking others to pray for us?
3. This isn't only for missionaries but for each of us.
  - a. I am extremely thankful for all of you who pray for Julie and me.
  - b. I am convinced your prayers have sustained us, provided for us, and strengthened us in our calling.

D. What do we pray for?

## 2. Pray for others' boldness.

### A. Paul asks the believers to pray for God-given boldness.

1. As Paul awaits trial in Rome, he is asking “for a divine infusion of strength and courage to make the good news clear and powerful in every circumstance.”<sup>1</sup>
2. This is especially important as Paul will have the opportunity to share the Gospel with none other than Emperor Nero.
3. A few years later, this Emperor sent the order for Paul’s execution.
4. But in this moment, the Apostle has one desire: To make known the mystery of the Gospel to this man.

### B. The believers in Ephesus were unlikely ever to meet the Emperor, but they could pray for the one who would.

1. **When we pray for other believers, we participate in the advancement of the Kingdom.**
2. We each have unique circles of influence and responsibility.
3. Those circles are our mission field.
4. This is why we must pray for ourselves and have others pray for us so that we might be bold where only we can be bold.

### C. **There is never a good time for a weak presentation of the Gospel.**

1. You don’t always have to be weird when you witness, but you must always be empowered.
2. When you pray, don’t forget to pray for boldness.
  - a. But remember, when you pray for boldness, you also pray for opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> Osborne, Grant R. 2017. *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*. Osborne New Testament Commentaries. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

b. And if you refuse the opportunity, you won't receive the anointing.

D. Be prayerful when someone comes to mind.

1. Holy Spirit often recalls people to our hearts and minds.
2. There are countless testimonies of people being led to intercede for others in moments of crisis and need.
3. I'm thankful for grandparents who would give God their nights to pray for their families.
4. For many of us in the room, we need to be more obedient and faithful to those 2 am wake-ups and pray for people as they come to mind.

### 3. Inform and Encourage each other.

<sup>21</sup> Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me so that you may be informed. <sup>22</sup> I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.

A. Too many of us live our lives like spiritual orphans.

1. We withhold information and progress from each other, walking through life alone.
  - a. Then wonder why no one calls.
  - b. We wonder why we have no friends.
  - c. We wonder why it seems like no one cares.
  - d. Relationships require reciprocity.
2. The only way to build a healthy community is to inform and encourage.
  - a. No that doesn't mean you share all of your life with everyone.
    1. We do need to be mindful of what we share and with whom.

2. Not everyone can process what we are feeling, dealing with, or sensing from God.

b. It does mean that each of us need people, other than our spouse, to share our spiritual journey with.

B. The Apostle Paul was the most qualified person to exclude people from his life.

1. Yet, each of his letters is addressed to people and carried by dear friends and colleagues.

2. The end of Paul's letters introduce us to his dear friends and co-laborers like Tychicus.

3. One of the many characteristics of Paul's ministry is that he did not do it alone.

C. Let me encourage you to find people to walk this journey with.

1. Find someone to mentor you.

2. Find some peers, people who are in the same stage of life.

3. Find some people to mentor.

D. And in each of these relationships, inform and encourage.

#### 4. Let your love remain incorruptible.

A. The letter ends with this:

1. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.· ESV

2. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible. (NLT)

B. God's grace is attached to those who love Jesus.

1. To be seated with Christ in the heavenly realms is only possible because of God's grace.

2. To walk worthy of this calling that we have received is only possible because of God's grace.

3. To stand in strength and victory is only possible because of God's grace.

C. **There's nothing more valuable than having Jesus in your life.**

1. May that love be incorruptible.

a. Let us be on guard for anything or anyone that corrupts our love for Him.

b. Be wary of anything and anyone who causes your love to grow weary and worn.

2. May your love be steadfast.

a. When times are great, love Jesus from the mountain top.

b. When times are hard, love Jesus from the deepest valleys.

c. But whatever you do, do not let love waiver.

3. May your love be characterized by God's grace toward others.

a. Your love for Jesus should not make you angry to others.

b. Your love for Jesus does not give permission for envy, jealousy, pride, anger, or unforgiveness towards others.

c. Let your love be characterized by Grace.

d. In other words, **"Love Jesus, and don't be a jerk."**

Close:

A. Today we are preparing to do two things:

1. First, we want to participate in communion.

2. This act of participating in the broken body of Jesus and His shed blood is shared in community.

3. It is a reminder that Jesus' love is not for "me", but for "us".

B. Then, after communion, we are going to serve the community of Success.

1. It is my hope that through these tangible expressions of water, we can also share the love of Jesus and the Church with others.
2. So, if you are able to help, right after service we will meet in the warehouse/gym area.
3. If you are unable, I'm going to ask you to invest 10 minutes or so and pray here in the sanctuary for a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit and for a quick resolution to the water problem.

Prayer

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<sup>i</sup> Paul commends Tychicus as a "dear and faithful servant in the Lord." The term "dear" is actually "beloved brother" and emphasizes his extremely close relationship to Paul as his coworker and friend. Most likely he was traveling with Onesimus, Philemon's returning slave, whom Paul also called "a dear brother" in Colossians 4:9 and Philemon 16. If so the two, who had become trusted associates, personally carried the three letters back to the province of Asia. Paul wanted them to bring these churches up to date on his "circumstances" (NIV "everything"), which he summarized as "how I am and what I am doing," specifying his personal situation and the state of his ministry in Rome.<sup>i</sup> Osborne, Grant R. 2017. *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*. Osborne New Testament Commentaries. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.