



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

April 8, 2018

Standing Firm

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. —Ephesians 6:1-4

We don't want anyone to fight our battles for us. It's a matter of responsibility—and of pride. We insist on taking care of ourselves and needing no one else to do things for us.

What's central to living responsibly before men, doesn't work with God. Creatures may relate to each other in one way, but our relationship with our Creator is something entirely different. Whether we like it or not, we are by definition created beings, one hundred percent dependent on the One who made us. The Bible is redundant with examples of God care for His people when they trust in Him, and being *strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might* means trusting in His help in every circumstance, no matter what happens.

Stories of battles fill the pages of Scripture as much as stories of conflict and war fill the news today. One reason we know the Bible is true is that it's true to life. God's Word is filled with ideals to live by and aspirations to pursue, but it's also honest about the ugly realities of our sinful selves and sin-cursed world. And if the world is bigger than we are, the spiritual forces that rule our universe and wage war within it are vastly more powerful than us. We may feel like the center of the universe, but humans are frightfully puny.

That's why prayer is of cosmic significance. When we pray we engage in epic spiritual battle. Powers of darkness rage against the good God who created us. Spiritual forces arrayed against God wield all their power and expend every effort to turn people from Christ—to thwart and frustrate an abiding faith that He will keep them and care for their every need. The first and foremost priority for those who trust Christ is to stand firm in the faith, come what may.

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. It's always has been. When God promised to give Abraham a child and make of him a great nation, *He believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness* (Genesis 15:6). Abraham overcame the world by trusting for a quarter of a century that God would fulfill His promise. He stood firm—not perfect but firm—in faith.

Through all his years in prison, Joseph stood firm, and his faith gave him the victory and saved his people. For 400 years, Israel pined in exile, until God humbled the Egyptians and set His people free. At the Red Sea, God gave the clearest statement of how spiritual battle works, when He told His people, *The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent* (Exodus 14:14). That is essentially how spiritual battle is waged and won. And dependence on God's conquering power is what our prayers are all about.

Gideon, Sampson, David, Elijah and Elisha all tell the same truth. It is God who wages spiritual warfare and He alone wins the victory. Every account of spiritual triumph foreshadows God's ultimate victory, when Christ conquered sin and Satan on the cross, and death and hell at His resurrection. All we have to do is look to Him in faith. Prayer, in essence, is laying hold of Christ's victory in the daily challenges of life.

We are not as secure as we feel. Christendom defined the culture we live in. It's easy to live in the delusion that a few more tweaks in our government system, the right moral crusade or political campaign will place God's people in control for an age to come. How easy it is to believe that the Church is on the verge of getting the world right. Our number one spiritual battle is to see the truth for what it is.

The truth is that we are a desperately dependent people in a deeply sinful world. We always have been, and the assurance that things are going along pretty well is a lie. The one thing God's people need today is the one thing we have always needed. The realization that God is the conqueror, that we are His people, and that the only way to engage in spiritual battle is to look to Him intentionally and daily to fight and win for us, *to the praise of His glory*.

Prayer for Northpoint

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. –Hebrews 12:1-2

Christ promised that He will build His Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That promise is true for Northpoint Church right now. So easily we look to a man to lead us and fail to trust in the One who promises to build His Church.

Our faithful Savior is in this moment to turn our eyes and fix our focus entirely on Him. Let’s let Him do exactly that. Jesus is risen and alive today. When His people pray, He listens, and our prayers are an indication that He is working among us. Look to Him in prayer, regularly and expectantly.

- Ask Jesus to reveal *every weight* that slows us in our walk with Him, so we can lay it aside.
- Let go of the sin and doubt that cling so closely, and receive Christ’s deliverance.
- Ready yourself to run life’s marathon in His constant, omnipotent, enabling power.
- Expect Jesus to give joy in the journey and certainty of the victory He purchased with His blood.
- Anticipate His “Well done!” when we enter His presence.
- Day by day, with exuberant faith run the race Jesus has set before us.
- Yearn for Jesus, who waits to welcome us into glory, when we take hold of our reward in heaven.

Prayer for the Leadership of Northpoint.

- **John Sloan and family:** Ask God to guide and provide for them in this new stage of life and ministry
- **Pastors and Directors,** Brent Whitefield, Scott Williams, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, Tamene Menna, and Marty Wiegman: Pray for God’s grace and truth to rest on them, empower their ministry, and grow our church.
- **Lay Elders,** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah: Pray for strength, wisdom, and judgment to honor Christ as they lead our church.
- **Church Staff,** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Jacob Williams, Carolee Jefferson, Josh Figureoa, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn: Pray for love and skill to make their work effective and honoring to Christ.

Prayer Record

Record specific prayers you have below. Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. –Isaiah 40:30-31