

The Secret Sauce

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[0 : 0 0] If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6, people that know what they're doing in the kitchen have special touches that just set off a dish and make it right.

Somebody confessed to me between the worship hours that today they were going home and serving an experiment with a stow-bought cake.

Wow. I said, that's the stuff you do at home. Don't bring that stuff to church. You bring the good stuff to us. Sometimes folks do stuff like that and they don't tell you what they do.

It's a secret. They don't want you to know how good, how they got what they got. The secret formula for Coca-Cola is 130 years old and it sits in a vault at the Coca-Cola Museum in Atlanta.

KFC's original recipe is a secret. 11 herbs and spices. And I thought Heinz 57 had 57 ingredients, but I found out that J.H. Heinz' favorite number is 5 and his wife's favorite number is 7.

[1 : 1 0] And that's where they came up with the name. So I know Dawn's grandmother's secret recipe was bacon grease. And she served bacon grease with about anything.

And I'm convinced that you could pour bacon grease on something in the yard and eat it and it would be good. I haven't tried that and I encourage you not to try that, but I'm just saying.

It's the secret sauce that makes one dish stand out from another. Now I realize it is Christmas time and we're all ready, but I got to finish what I start.

And so today I want to conclude a series on the real war. Because folks, we're in a war that we can't see.

We see the evidence of it. A war that is filled with battles that we need to win. And our goal is to win every daily battle.

[2 : 1 1] That's the goal, okay? Now I will tell you that we were born in sin and we're sinners by our own commission. So we will not win every battle, okay?

You will fail. But our effort is to win every daily battle. At least as many as we possibly can. And to be clear, the war has been won, thank God.

Christ won the war on the cross, but now we're fighting skirmishes that we don't need to be fighting. And we lose too many battles. We've been talking about spiritually defending ourselves and we talked about the offensive weapon being the word of God.

Now, what I want you to know today is what will really set you off for victory. It's what I call the secret sauce. For context, I want to read Ephesians chapter 6, beginning in verse 16, where it says this.

In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

[3 : 20] Our key passage today, praying at all times with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

And also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.

The secret sauce of spiritual victory is consistent, heartfelt, dedicated, life-surrendering prayer.

Like a secret sauce, you need to make sure that prayer is part of your processes. Now, how do we do that? Well, this passage tells us how to do that.

First, it tells us to pray on all occasions. When do we pray? Do we pray in the morning?

[4 : 28] Or do we pray in the evening? Yes. Both. When we think we need to pray, we pray. When we don't think we need to pray, we pray.

When we want to pray and feel like praying, we pray. When we don't want to pray and don't feel like praying, we pray. When we feel strong in prayer, we pray.

When we feel weak in prayer, we pray. Verse 18 says, Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer. All prayer means that's the kind of prayer you pray on your knees.

It's also the kind of prayer you pray driving down the road. It's the kind of prayer you pray with your hands folded in front of you. It's the kind of prayer that you pray with your hands up in the air.

And I discourage you from doing either one of those when you're driving and praying. Okay? It's about praying publicly. It's about praying privately.

[5 : 36] It's about praying with loud cries. It's about praying with silent whispers. Pray prayers of praise because of who he is.

Pray prayers of thanksgiving because of what he's done. Pray prayers of confession because of what we've done. Pray prayers of petition for what we want him to do.

Pray prayers of intercession for what you want, who you want him to do it through. and with. We're to pray at all times. It is to be an ongoing conversation.

1 Thessalonians 5, 17 says, Pray without ceasing. Now, that means when a burdensome thought crosses your mind, give that to God.

When a hateful thought crosses your mind, give that to God. When an impure thought crosses your mind, give that to God.

[6 : 34] When an inappropriate thought crosses your mind, give that to God. When a negative thought crosses your mind, give that to God. 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5, says take every thought captive to obey Christ.

I compared it a couple weeks ago to playing the arcade game Whack-A-Mole. When them things popped up, you hit them with a hammer. When another one popped up, you hit it with a hammer. And the reality is in our life, we need to be whacking the moles that come up with prayer.

When thoughts cross our mind that don't need to cross our mind, we take those thoughts to God. We catch them. We take them captive to obey Christ.

When good things come, give God praise. When bad things come, give that over to God. Trust Him with it. Don't wait until the evening when that time comes.

Don't wait until the morning when that time comes. Don't wait until you get still. There's great value and very biblical value.

[7 : 41] And the men that journey with me on Tuesday mornings know we've been over this again and again and again. There is a need in your life to have a still time with the Lord, quietly, quietly, alone, with His Word in your lap and seeking His face in prayer.

There is desperate need of that in all of our lives. It needs to be a habit, a practice that we do every day that God allows us to.

But we also address the Lord in an ongoing fashion. I get confused these days between who's crazy in the world and who's got an earbud in.

When I'm in the store and somebody's having a full-blown conversation with nobody and I don't know that they got something in their ear and they're talking to somebody or maybe they're just talking to themselves, you know.

I want to help, but it don't seem appropriate, you know. Whether verbal or not, that's the kind of ongoing prayer that we ought to have with the Lord.

[9 : 06] When things come up, give them over to God. I mean, prayer is about taking time to be still and alone and before the Lord.

However, it's also about walking with Him and talking with Him. That's what praying in the Spirit is all about. Part of what praying in the Spirit is all about. Now, how do we do that?

Well, the way it works is we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, let me explain something to you.

As a child of God, if you surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, you receive all the Holy Spirit you're ever going to get. Okay?

The Holy Spirit in several things happen when we're saved and one of them is the Holy Spirit indwells us. Okay? So we have the Holy Spirit in our lives.

[10 : 05] But there are times when we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Okay? It's kind of like a balloon for lack of a better. There's not a good illustration. I'll promise you.

But it's kind of like a balloon. It can be there, but it can be deflated or it can be inflated. There's times when we walk with the Lord faithfully, obediently, taking matters that are not obedient and laying them before Him and asking Him to forgive us and then walking away from Him that He fills us with His Holy Spirit.

We already got the Holy Spirit, but we get filled. Our balloon gets inflated, if you will. We're where we need to be. I make it a practice not to run out of gas in my vehicle.

Okay? Just don't do that. I'm not going to do the push of shame. I'm not going to do it. Okay? But at the same time, it's not always full.

And the reality is that we always have the Holy Spirit, but we're not always filled with the Holy Spirit. Our lives don't reflect that.

[11 : 14] And I wish that by your attendance this morning that you'd just be fully inflated and leave here filled with the Holy Spirit. But the reality is that's not what it's based on.

It's not based on your appearance here. It's not based on your presence here. It's not based on being excited about the music. It's not based on enjoying the sermon.

All of those things can play into it, but the reality is it's got to do with your personal relationship with Christ. Where are you at with the matters that He's laid before you that you know you need to deal with? What have you done with that?

And when you walk away from that, God blesses such as that and He'll fill you with the Holy Spirit of God. You'll be filled. The Holy Spirit will take over your life.

You'll make good decisions because you're not leaning on yourself. You're leaning on the Holy Spirit of God to do it. You'll live more godly. And that kind of relationship, you don't fall out of relationship with the Lord when you're not walking with Him if you're a child of God.

[12 : 17] But you're not filled with the Holy Spirit. You're not making good decisions. You're not doing it right. And so the challenge for us is to keep that, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and we're filled with the Holy Spirit when we take God's Word in and when we respond obediently to it.

There's not a ritual we can do with that. It's a life. We live for that. And God loves us regardless of our actions but He does greater things. Get this now.

He does greater things in those who are filled with the Holy Spirit of God. He does greater things in those that are walking obediently to God that are conversing with the Lord about matters that they need to deal with and are walking away from the things that become a hindrance to them.

God blesses such as that. James 5, 16 says the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it's working. But it does make a difference in what kind of life we're living.

It does make a difference if we're trying to be independent or we're being dependent upon Him. I want you to listen to what happens when we pray in the Spirit. Romans 8, 26, and 27 says this.

[13 : 31] Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness for we don't know what to pray for as we ought. You ever been there? When you're in a situation and you need to pray about it but you don't know how to pray?

Maybe I'm the only one. But for we don't know what we ought to pray for as we ought but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words and He who searches hearts knows what's in the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Now for that to happen we have to pray in the Spirit. That means not pray selfishly, not pray about what I want but pray about what God wants because prayer is not about trying to get my will into heaven.

Prayer is about getting God's will into my life and on earth and God moves in such prayers as that. He'll move in the prayer. He'll move in the prayer.

The one that's doing the praying. So we pray on all occasions. The second thing is we pray with every effort. He says keep alert with all perseverance.

[14 : 50] Now I want you to think about something. I want to ask you something. If someone's trying to break into your home and you are at home and you know he's trying to do it when do you give up and open the door and let him in to do whatever he wants to do?

Well I don't. Okay? I don't. I warn him. I call the law and then I introduce him to my little friend.

Okay? However, I'm not going to stand by and let somebody endanger my family. It's not going to happen.

And I want to advise you something. We're in a war and someone is pursuing your family and you better be on watch.

And I'm telling you don't get weary. Fight, defend, do it on your knees. When Jesus was praying in the garden right before his arrest he told his disciples to watch and pray.

[16 : 06] And you know what they did? They fell asleep is what they did. And in Matthew 26 verse 40 through 41 he says this. And he came to his disciples and found them sleeping and he said to Peter.

And notice he's talking to Peter. Now why did he talk to Peter about this? Because they were all sleeping apparently. He says that to Peter because he knows Peter's about to face a huge temptation that night.

God's doing a move at First Baptist I'm thankful for that and so God's leading you here I encourage you to come we guide you in that process or maybe you just got stuff you need to deal with and you can deal with that when we stand where you are or you can deal with this altar or this pastor would love to pray with you if you'd like for me to I don't know what God's doing in your heart but you'll never be satisfied unless you follow it so just be obedient Heavenly Father I love you and I thank you Lord for your love for us and I ask right now that you'll work and you'll move in our midst as only you can Lord Jesus in Jesus name Amen