

Spiritual Warfare Series - the Great Privilege

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the power and privilege of prayer, particularly when guided by the Holy Spirit, in the context of spiritual warfare and intercession for others.

Duration: 26:24

Scripture: Acts 4:29, Acts 4:31, Ephesians 6:19

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this video, the speaker shares his experience of being invited to speak at a conference where he felt pressured to conform to the atmosphere and not 'rock the boat.' Despite his initial fear and lack of preparation, he trusted in God's guidance and delivered a sermon that had a profound impact on the audience. The video highlights the importance of seeking God's will and being faithful in sharing His message, even in challenging circumstances. The speaker also emphasizes the need for revival in the church and in the country, and encourages viewers to pray for these things.

Transcript

Of all the miracles about prayer, that there's a God who created the heavens and earth, and that yet He hears our cry, He hears our prayer, and that He would condescend to intervene in our lives, that is such a miracle. The miracle of prayer is one of the great miracles in the Bible. People pray and God answers.

You would think God would be too busy, or God would be too remote, or God would be too great, or God would be too holy, but me, frail, faulty as I am, and He's waiting to hear what I will pour out of my heart tonight. On top of that, this is one step beyond. Look at this, and it's part of the spiritual warfare that we started talking about on Sunday.

Ephesians 6, after all the armor is listed, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, the shield of faith, with which you'll be able to put out all the fiery darts of the enemy, and then, and pray in the Spirit, capital S, on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert, and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people, and pray in the Spirit, capital S, on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert, and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

So what's a couple obvious truths from here as we keep looking at that verse? Notice, pray, come to God, commune with Him, open your heart to Him, speak to Him, bring your petitions to Him, but notice, not just

pray, but pray in the Spirit. That means open up your heart, and in your prayer, be guided by the Holy Spirit. There's two main views of that verse among serious theologians, if I could say that.

Well, some don't believe that happens today, but we believe the Bible, we believe you can pray in the Spirit. It means, number one, at least, it means pray, yielded to the Holy Spirit, so that He can guide you and suggest subjects to pray for. He can give you the words to speak and pray.

Have you ever been praying and start saying words that you hadn't even thought of, and yet, as you're saying those words in English, you're realizing, oh, these words really express something. The Holy Spirit's helping you. Let, pray in the Spirit, let Him provide your faith, let Him provide your fervency.

There's nothing worse than trying to be fervent in prayer without the help of the Holy Spirit. It's an emotional working up of noise and all of that, because, oh, the factual fervent prayer of a righteous person makes tremendous power available. But He's saying, now, the only one who can do that is the Holy Spirit.

Remember Paul in Romans eight, we know not how we ought to pray, but who helps us? The Holy Spirit helps us, sometimes with what groans too deep to be uttered. So praying in the Holy Spirit, at least, means inspired by the Spirit, directed by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, given passion by the Spirit, given faith by the Spirit, words by the Spirit. And then, the other passage of Scripture that speaks about this is 1 Corinthians 14, when Paul says, okay, he's talking now about the ecstasy that the Holy Spirit brings on people in the New Testament, and there's no verse that says it stopped then, where they were able to speak in other languages at their spirit baptism, their spirit filling.

And then, it goes on to say that in the service in church meetings, that gift is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which, coupled together with interpretation, can edify the church. The unknown tongue, or the glossolalia, it doesn't mean anything to any of us. We don't understand what's being said.

But then, the Spirit gives somebody the gift of interpretation, and we hear an encouraging, directive word from the Lord. But, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14, as he's trying to regulate how the Spirit works, and not to get carried away, and abuse that, and get into the flesh, or emotions, he says, so, what shall I say? He says, I will pray with my understanding, but I will also pray in the Spirit. Now, to the Western mind, that's very difficult, because we don't, we want to be in control, and know what we're doing all the time.

And to yield yourself, and to be praying in an unknown language, your prayer language, as some people call it, to pray in another language, and not know what you're praying for, but we know that if the Spirit is prompting that praying, you're praying on a deeper level, because he knows things you could never know, and he's directing you to pray for that. So, Paul says, so, I'll do both. I'll pray with my understanding.

Oh, my friend Bob lost his job. Lord, help Bob. I'm praying with my understanding, and God will hear that.

But even then, oh, Lord, help me to pray in the Spirit, so I have faith for Bob, and direct me how to pray for Bob, and is there something else that Bob needs? Direct me. Or, to yield, for those who have experienced that, and believe in that, and if you don't, you should believe in it, because it's in the Bible. And Paul said, I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you, and he wasn't doing it in the services, he was doing it mostly in prayer.

In fact, he said, in a public meeting, I'd rather just say five words in the language you would understand than thousands of words in tongues, because you won't understand what's being said. So, speaking in tongues is not so much for a microphone and someone screaming into it, because then the unlearned or

the visitor, they don't know what's being said. Paul says, I will also sing with my understanding.

I'll sing this. More than ever before, Lord, I love you. More than ever before, Lord, I need you.

That's my understanding. He also says, I will sing with my spirit, inspired by the Holy Spirit. I'll sing songs that he gives me, and I won't know what I'm singing, but it'll be good to God.

It'll be beautiful to God. So, pray, but pray in the Spirit, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests, and that shows that prayer is not in the box praying. You pray when you're walking.

You pray one sentence. You get alone and pray for 20 minutes. You pray at an altar.

You pray in a subway. You praise God in a bathroom, in the shower. All kinds of prayer, all kinds of situations.

You pray with another person. You pray by yourself. Notice that prayer isn't just, we're gonna pray.

Notice it says, pray on all occasions. Always be ready for that prompting of the Spirit to pray for some need that you're aware of, with all kinds of prayers and requests. You know, the Catholic Church has that ejaculatory prayer that they teach people where they go, Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

Any of you know about that prayer, right? They're taught to say that, but that's just by rote. It usually doesn't connect with anyone, and you shouldn't be praying to Mary and Joseph. If you got Jesus, you don't need help from anybody else, I can assure you, but it shows that sometimes you can just be walking down the street and say, help me, Jesus.

You don't have to say, our Father, which art in heaven. Sometimes just help. Anybody ever just cry out like me, help me, Lord? Help me, Lord, help me.

With this in mind, be alert. Don't fall asleep. Be aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing, and be aware of the devil trying to distract you.

Be alert. Don't fall asleep. Be alert as we pray tonight.

Prayer takes so much out of you if you pray it right, because you can't fall asleep if you're really praying. Now, here's the thing. Not for yourself.

Now we have the first mention here in this passage of what's called intercessory prayer. Pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers guided by the Spirit, and keep on praying. Don't quit, don't give up, for all the Lord's people.

Pray for someone who might not be praying for themselves. Pray for someone who the Lord brings to your heart is in trouble. Even though you don't think they're in trouble, somehow you sense they are in trouble or in need of some kind.

Pray for them. Intercede for them. Not only the miracle that God answers prayer for me, but that God would hear me on planet Earth pray for somebody in Kansas City, Missouri, and that God would go and help that person because I was praying in Brooklyn.

What a miracle that is. Someone in Trinidad could be visited tonight by the prayers of someone praying in Brooklyn. Is that not a miracle? Because a lot of people who need God's help aren't praying.

So if they're not gonna pray for themselves, God says, I'll stir my people up to pray. But someone's gotta pray because when you call, I will answer. Pray also for me.

Paul, you're the greatest apostle that ever lived. You saw the Lord on the road to Damascus. Yeah, I know all that.

Pray for me because we all need prayer. How many need prayer, people to pray for you? I love when people come to me and pray for me. One day at a very low moment, I was standing right at this pulpit and someone felt prompted by the Holy Spirit and actually walked up on the platform and put their hand on my back and prayed for me.

And I needed it. I needed it. And I felt the grace that came through that prayer.

That whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. In case there's a minister here or visiting, isn't this interesting? God shows us that Paul didn't have notes or anything to go by. He says, pray for me that when I open my mouth, whenever, I never know when I'll have a chance, but pray that when I open my mouth, words will be given me.

That means tomorrow you could be in your job or doing something and an opportunity comes and all God says is don't worry, you don't know what to say. Just open your mouth and start and I'll give you words as you speak. Is that an awesome promise? Come on, let's say amen to that.

That's awesome. Paul says, pray that as I open my mouth, words may be given me. Words may be given me.

Pray for that. For which, make known the mystery of the gospel for which I'm an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should.

So Paul says, I need two things. I need to know what to say when I open my mouth. That's scary.

We live today under a whole system and Bible schools reinforce it. You can't preach unless you have notes. It used to be 150 years ago that ministers were taught, you write out your whole sermon.

You memorize it, you give it on Sunday. None of that is found in the Bible. If you read the book of Acts, they didn't even know the day they would preach because the way circumstances happened, they just, whoom, something happened.

Now Peter stands up and begins to speak with what? No notes, from his heart, with the Holy Spirit giving him words. God will help us as we open our mouth and that we do it fearlessly, Paul says, and not be afraid, be bold. He says, the only one who can help me do that is God.

Would you pray that God would do that? What humility. Here's the greatest preacher that we know of saying, pray that I'll know what to say and that God will give me boldness when I say it. I was in Indianapolis, Indiana, and I was supposed to speak to 10,000 people the next day at nine in the morning, 10 in the morning.

I went the night before to an event at the same venue, filled with gospel music, and then the program for the next day was me speaking. So I sized up the room and I said, God, I want to be a blessing to these people. I brought notes.

I was using notes back then. I brought notes for a nice, simple sermon, blessing to the people, encouragement, and I went back to my hotel room early. I didn't stay with my daughter and son-in-law.

I went back. So I get in my hotel room in Indianapolis and I look at my Bible. I get alone in a chair and I look at my notes and the thing just dies.

I feel nothing. I can't speak on that. As God was saying, I don't want you talking on that.

You're just preaching something safe to get through. You're gonna just, what, entertain the people? I don't want you to do that. So I said, Lord, then what should I speak on? I have no other notes, and I was kind of dependent on notes back then, and God begins to deal with me about a message that I don't think I had ever preached about my house shall be called a house of prayer.

I can't preach that here. There's 10,000 people. They want to hear gospel music.

I'm not their pastor. This is very confrontational message. You ask me what you should preach on? Preach on that.

I'll give it, I'll help you. Now I'm getting nervous, and on top of that, the place had no pulpit. It had no front.

It was 10,000 people in the round. So you had a, they told me the night before, when you are mic'd up, you have to keep walking and looking and talking all the way around. Well, I'm not used to that, and this was some years ago.

So I'm in my room, and now fear attacks me, and I go, I can't preach this. I don't have notes. What will I say? And God begins to really deal with me.

You asked me what I should speak. I sent you here for a reason. Now speak on this.

Well, I start pacing the room. I can see myself now. Now it's 10.30, 11, and now I'm walking around the room.

I can't stay in my seat, and I'm just praying. Oh, God, show me what to say. I'm waiting on you.

What should I? Oh, God, I can't say that to the people. And as I, it's very challenging, kind of direct, and as I'm walking around the room, I start suddenly getting attacked because I see people walking out or looking at me and going, we didn't come here for this. We didn't pay good money to come to this big conference to hear you talk about prayer.

Oh, just a huge attack. So now I'm walking around the room, and now I'm really praying, and suddenly, out of nowhere, like the room goes black on me. The lights were still on, but I mean a darkness came in that room, and now I'm fighting for my life.

My heart is beating, and I'm going, God, help me. Please help me, God, to be faithful. I won't preach that other message, but God, and I mean attacks in my mind.

Everywhere there was an attack. Now it's one in the morning. Now it's two in the morning.

Now it's 2.30 in the morning. Now it's three in the morning, and I'm walking around that room. Brothers and sisters, I'm telling you the truth before God.

I am desperate because I know unless it helps me, I can't speak. I wanna be faithful, but I'm seeing these reactions that people could have, and it's not like having your own church. You're invited, and the atmosphere there was just don't rock the boat.

It was that kind of event. Don't rock the boat, and this was a rock the boat sermon. So now I am in between a rock and a hard place.

Maybe at four o'clock in the morning. I can't remember the time now. I just feel like a release.

I feel something from God. Like I feel a peace, and I lay in my bed. About five after six in the morning, the phone rings.

Wakes me up. I don't know where I am because I've only been sleeping a couple hours, and it's my wife, and she says, hello. I go, Carol, it's five after six in the morning.

She said, no. What's wrong? What's going on there? I said, what are you talking about? She said, what's going on with you? Because I couldn't sleep last night. God woke me up.

I've been praying for you all through the night. What's going on there? What battle are you in? Tell me what battle you're facing, and I went, how could she know this? I remember the hot tears coming out of my eyes on the phone, and she said, no. You're not gonna be afraid, and she started praying for me over the phone, right? Okay.

She gets through. I shower, I shave, I get in a suit. I go over to the event.

Oh, was the Lord with me. That fearful person so attacked in his mind, I got up there, bold but tender, and I preached, and the audience melted. People stood for prayer.

I mean, God did something, and it was videoed, and I had signed away all the video rights of that message. That's what you do in these places, so I signed it away, and I ministered, and people hugged me at the end, and they said, wow, we never had a meeting like that here at this conference. About two weeks, three weeks later, the man who ran the conference calls me, and he went, hey, Jim, thank you for coming to the conference.

I just want you to know, three or four weeks have gone by, that video of you speaking, we've never had any video so like that in the history of our event, and I mean, if you see that video, which you can, I'm out on a limb. I don't know where I am. I have no notes, no nada.

I have nothing. He calls me five months later. He said, this is remarkable.

This thing, we can't stock it enough, right? This happened years ago. Two years later, a ministry of prayer in the country called and said, look, a wealthy donor wants to send 5,000 of your DVDs, My House Shall Be Called, A House of Prayer, wants to send it to ministers to encourage them, but we have to buy it. Can we get it from you? I said, no, I have no control.

It's all of them. Well, they're charging us this certain price, and it's very high. Could you intercede for us and ask them? I said, I will.

I called my friend, and I said, give a break on this, right? Did you know, all these years later, that thing is selling, and just last week, I got an email, all these years later, an email saying, I just saw your DVD, My

House Shall Be Called, A House of Prayer. I showed it at my church on a Sunday morning instead of me preaching, and the whole church came forward to pray, and like a revival broke out. Why? Because something that God puts his hand on has more power than all of your effort and my effort put together, am I right? But listen, it wouldn't have happened that way unless God woke somebody up, in this case, Carol, and she interceded because how in the world would she call me at five after six and say, what's going on? She wouldn't even say hello or banter about how are you, how did last night go? Just the first thing, what's going on there? How would she know that except by the Holy Spirit? And why would she be able to pray like she did except by the Holy Spirit? And how could God help somebody like me except by the Holy Spirit? Here's how I wanna close this little teaching.

As you go to pray, pray for our church that God will make it more filled with the Holy Spirit, that we'll be stronger in presenting the gospel, that we'll make more converts this year for Christ than in any year in the history of our church. Pray for the congregation that God will make us bold and will speak, in other words, pray for our church. That means the people, the leadership, we're gonna intercede for this church.

How many are with me so far? Just say amen. So whoever you are, pray for our church. If you feel led to later, pray for other churches.

Nothing special about our church, but since we're here and just let's pray for our church. Number two, let's pray for our country. We just had President Obama sworn in now for a second term.

We know he's not the answer. Democrats are not the answer. Republicans are not the answer.

Everybody agree on that, say amen. That's not the answer. Let's pray that even with the debt that we're accumulating at record pace, that God will shake people so that they'll look up to him, that the morality of our country will improve because when I hold my little grandson Levi, who's three years old, in my arms, I think to myself, what kind of world is he gonna grow up in? What's he gonna hear in school now? What in the world is going on? And because of the media and the internet, things are changing like this.

What used to take 50 years to change, it can happen now in nine months because everything is happening so quickly. So our church, that God would make it what it should be, which it's not, including me. Number two, our country.

And if you weren't born here, how many were born here, lift your hands. How many were not born here, lift your hands. It's almost, I sense almost equal.

But you do live here now. And you gotta pray that God will visit America with some kind of revival, that God will stir up the churches and we'll see something happen in America for the sake of our children. For the sake of our children or grandchildren or whatever.

Thirdly, who might God be laying on your heart today? A brother-in-law, a cousin, a boss, a coworker. Sylvia Glover is sitting in the front row now. She's here because someone, yes, witnessed to her and brought her here.

But that person who was talking to her was praying for her. And God answers prayer. You think Sylvia was praying? She was not praying.

She was a Rastafarian or whatever she was back then. She was not praying. But she's here tonight, mighty woman of faith and prayer.

So who do you know that's in trouble in Jamaica, in Trinidad, in the Bronx, Brooklyn, down the block, in your own house? Who might the Holy Spirit put on your heart? And we're gonna take time to intercede for that person. We're gonna pray for our church, leadership, congregation. God, make us what we should be.

God, please make us what we should be. Number two, we're gonna pray for our country. God, have mercy on America.

Have mercy on America. Number three, God, who should I be praying for tonight? Don't pray for 10 people. Don't pray for eight people.

Pray for one or two at the most. Really focus in. So we're standing on holy ground here today.

We're gonna pray for our church. We're gonna intercede for our country. And now, let's close our eyes.

Mother, Father, coworker, I don't care how hard the case is. I don't care if they curse God five times a day. Paul was persecuting Christians and God converted him.

For with God, nothing is impossible. The Bible says, and I looked for somebody who would stand in the gap, and I could find no one, but God's gonna find us standing in the gap for people tonight. I want those who really have a special person that they're burdened for.

I know you're gonna pray for our church. I know you're gonna pray for our country. But those who really have someone they love who is in mucho trouble, they really need God to intervene in their life.

Could be a sister, someone back in the Caribbean, a brother in Jamaica, whatever, wherever. God, the Holy Spirit, has put them on your heart tonight, and you wanna intercede. We're gonna wait, and we're gonna pray, and heaven is gonna be shaken by our prayers, and God is gonna answer the intercession of his people.

Why would he tempt us or taunt us by saying pray, but then I'm not gonna help you? No, he says pray because he will help us. Anybody here got some major person or two that you know, pastor, I'm gonna stand in the gap tonight. I'm gonna intercede for them.

Just get out of your seat and come up here, and stand here, or kneel here, or sit here. Just come.

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