

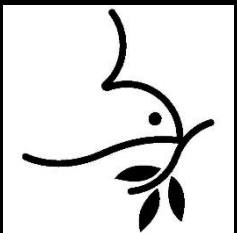
# *Not Against Flesh & Blood*

A stone statue of an angel with large, feathered wings, holding a sword, set against a cloudy sky. The angel is depicted in a standing pose, facing slightly to the right. The wings are spread wide, and the sword is held in the right hand, pointing downwards. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky.

*A Seven Week Series on Spiritual Warfare*  
*Week Four: Prayer in Imagination*

# Not Against Flesh & Blood

1. Creation & Chaos
2. Cruciformed Sovereignty
3. Prayer as Holy Resistance
- 4. Prayer in Imagination**
5. Sword of the Spirit
6. Worship as Warfare
7. Hell Will Not Prevail



Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:  
**[www.christiansburgmennonite.org](http://www.christiansburgmennonite.org)**

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Paul, Ephesians 6:12 NIV

# Prayer as Holy Resistance—*A Summary*

- Spiritual evil requires spiritual warfare in prayer
- Our impulse to fight should be exercised in prayer
- We have the ability to resist evil influences and the powers that seek to exploit weaknesses
- A delayed response to our prayers could be the result of a number of different unseen factors
- The *aim* of our prayers is to bring heaven to earth, to call down the Kingdom in the present evil age
- Persistent resistance through prayer changes things

“God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil...” E.M. Bounds, *On Prayer*

“We are *gardeners and field* workers laboring with God.”

Paul, 1 Corinthians 3:9 (VOICE)

“My conviction is that many Christians do not pray as passionately as they could because they don’t see how it could make any significant difference. They pray, but they often do so out of sheer obedience and without the sense of urgency that Scripture consistently attaches to prayer.”

Greg Boyd, *God of the Possible* (pg.95)

“Reflection on the working of prayer provides us with insight into the nature of prayer. As we come to understand more fully what prayer is and how prayer brings its divinely intended results, we are assisted in the task of eliminating the *intellectual* and *volitional* roadblocks to the life of prayer.”

Stanley Grenz, *Prayer: The Cry for the Kingdom* (pg.7)



# Presuppositions That Impact Prayer Life

Our view on the following will impact our view of prayer:

- 1. Nature of time & the universe** (e.g. determinism or free will / blueprint theology or warfare worldview—real battle of wills)
- 2. God's sovereignty, character & image** (e.g. Zeus / Cosmic Santa Claus or “Abba” Father / Jesus— “image of the invisible God”)
- 3. God's foreknowledge** (e.g. all is settled & final or future is to some degree open—God sees possibilities, we actualize reality/future)

# The Prayer Life of Jesus

- **Prayed alone...** (Lk 5:16)  
in the morning (Mk 1:35); in the evening (Matt 14:23);  
all night long (Lk 6:12)
- **Prayed with/for his disciples** (Lk 6:12; Lk 22:32; Jn 17:1-26)
- **Prayed for his enemies** (Matt 5:44; Lk 6:28; 23:34)
- **Prayed against Satan & rebuked him** (Matt 4:10; 16:23)
- **Prayed in all situations & moods** (Lk 22:41-44; Jn 11:41-42; 12:27-28)
- **Taught his disciples how to pray** (Matt 6:9-13; Lk 11:1-4)

“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” Hebrews 5:7 NIV

“Jesus’ prayer life indicates well that he viewed prayer as being connected to the future completion of God’s work in the world... Jesus viewed prayer as a focal point in his battle against Satan. Prayer as a means by which he came to be equipped to gain the victory over God’s cosmic foe... Jesus’ own cry for the kingdom.”

Stanley Grenz, *Prayer: The Cry for the Kingdom* (pg.18)

## Jesus, Matthew 6:9-13 NLT

Pray like this:

Our Father [Abba] in heaven,  
may your name be kept holy.  
May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.  
And don't let us yield to temptation,  
but rescue us from the evil one [Satan].

“The Lord’s Prayer, therefore, stands as the capstone of Jesus’ prayer life shared with us. For this reason, when we pattern our prayer after his, our prayer becomes an eschatological activity. Just as the petition “Your kingdom come...” formed the heart of Jesus’ praying, so also in every situation the petitions of Jesus’ friends ought to be a cry for the in-breaking of God’s rulership, God’s will, into our world.”

Stanley Grenz, *Prayer: The Cry for the Kingdom* (pg.23)

“But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”

Jesus, Matthew 6:6 NLT

## **Jesus, Luke 11:9-10 NIV**

<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”



## Exodus 33:7-11 NIV

<sup>7</sup> Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. <sup>8</sup> And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. <sup>9</sup> As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. <sup>10</sup> Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. <sup>11</sup> The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

“Unlike most people throughout history, including people in biblical times and culture, we tend to view the imagination not as a vehicle to access reality but as a way to flee from reality. Tragically, we view imagination primarily as a means to create fantasy. We have been taught to distrust the imagination in spiritual matters—a distrust that has catastrophic consequences for our spiritual growth.”

Greg Boyd, *Seeing is Believing* (pg 15)

## Paul, 2 Corinthians 3:14-18 NIV

<sup>14</sup> But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. <sup>15</sup> Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. <sup>16</sup> But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

## 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 NIV

<sup>4</sup> The god of this age [Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

<sup>5</sup> For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Paul, Romans 12:2 NIV

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Paul, 2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV

## Jesus, John 14:16-18 NIV

<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

<sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

## **Paul, 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 NIV**

<sup>12</sup> What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup> This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

“God is able to penetrate and intertwine himself within the fibers of the human self...”

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God* (pg 59)



“you can actually encounter the living Christ... be addressed by His voice and be touched by His healing power. It can be more than an exercise of the imagination; it can be a genuine confrontation. Jesus Christ will actually come to you.”

Richard Foster, *Celebrating Discipline* (pg 26)

## **Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30 MSG**

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

# Prayer in Imagination—*A Summary*

- Our presuppositions and our picture of God impacts our prayer life
- Jesus calls us to see prayer as aligning with the Father's will and joining with God in actualizing the future of the Kingdom
- Prayer is for all situations, concerns, and moods we experience
- Imagination guided by the Spirit & Scripture is our main receptor to the spiritual world—the avenue of the mind that accesses spiritual realities
- Prayer in imagination is about moving from abstract, theological concepts to experiencing God concretely with “real” vivid images

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