

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Searching for a Better Life

Week 5: Reverse the Curse

INTRO: Aren't we all looking for a better life?

The gospel is God's way of reversing Satan's corruption.

Question: If God is in control, why is life so hard?

EPHESIANS 6:17-20. 5 things Paul tells us about prayer:

- 1. Prayer Engages a Spiritual Battle in a Physical World. (Ephesians 6:12)** When Paul prays, you see him praying not for physical things, but for spiritual things. When we pray, we are asking Jesus to bring the spiritual realm to bear on the physical realm. We are asking for Him to reverse the curse, to take what Satan meant for evil & use it for God's good. We're not asking for our circumstances to change, but we're asking for the grace to make it through our circumstances.
- 2. Prayer connects our lives with the Gospel & the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 6:17-18)** Paul gives us 2 specific keys to prayer: **Prayer is directly tied to (1) the work of the Holy Spirit & (2) to the word of God.**
When you pray through the Holy Spirit & in conjunction with Scripture, it keeps you anchored to truth. Truth is what we need to fight these battles. If we focus on the battle but not the truth, we'll be in despair. If we focus on the truth but not the battle, we'll be irrelevant. The mature Christian views the battle through the filter of truth.
- 3. Prayer sets captive people free. (Ephesians 6:19)** We must carry the message of freedom to others. When you pray, you are bringing freedom to captive people. You're asking God to open their eyes to the hope that is available. You're not asking Him to take away the problems, but to give grace for whatever circumstance comes.
- 4. Prayer brings clarity to our pain. (Ephesians 6:20)** Paul knew that the gospel was greater than the story of his shackles. Jesus knew it. He prayed before His arrest asking God to change His circumstances. **MARK 14:36.** Jesus knew that there was a greater story than His suffering because His suffering would bring salvation. When we pray, it doesn't always change our circumstances, but it changes how we look at them. It brings clarity to our pain & can bring sense to our suffering. It gives us a new filter through which to look at life.

5. Prayer is courageous, not cowardly. (Ephesians 6:20) Prayer is the natural outgrowth of the Word of God, the battle cry of freedom. Prayer moves you from focusing on yourself & forces you to focus on others.

If God is in control, why is life so hard? Difficulties (in our lives) don't deny the Gospel truth—they undergird it.

If we ask, "why is life so hard?" we're asking the wrong question. It's better to ask, "If life is so hard, why am I not engaging the battle?" "If life is so hard, why have I ignored the tools that God has given me?" "If life is so hard, why have I not suited up in the full armor of God & relying on the gospel?" **The Gospel is God's Way of Reversing Satan's corruption.**

The Gospel can change YOU.