

Sunday, April 26, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Introduction

Introduction

- Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-21—what do these two passages and many others like them have in common throughout Paul’s epistles?
- They are prayers. But are not just any prayers they are Holy Sprit inspired prayers. These passages are literally God the Holy Spirit praying through the Apostle of the Gentiles.
- This morning we are going to be a new series of studies entitled Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul. Throughout the course of this study we will look at Paul’s fourteen most significant prayers and what they can teach us about how to pray as members of the body of Christ.
- A month or so back during our series on The Worlds’ Most Dangerous Doctrine we looked at how prayer was a dispensational topic and functions according to the dispensation under which God is currently operating.
- We have already how under the Law, God would not even hear Israel’s prayer when they had transgressed the covenant and broken God’s laws.
- This morning we are going to take a general look at Paul’s teaching on prayer by way of introduction to this series.

Prayer Without Ceasing

- I Thessalonians 5:17—teaches a straightforward yet incredibly profound instruction regarding prayer. Pray without stopping.
- Right away this verse challenges our traditional views of prayers. Pray folding your hands, bowing your head, closing your eyes, and praying. It is impossible for you to pray that way without stopping.
- The presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit has changed all of the rules when it comes to prayer.
- I Corinthians 12:13—God the Holy Spirit is what places us into the body of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:30—God the Holy Spirit also takes up residence in your spirit and seals us in Christ until the day of redemption.

- In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would come upon people for a time in order to accomplish a task but it would not permanently indwell the Old Testament Saints.
 - Judges 3:10, 6:34, 14:6
 - II Samuel 7:15
 - Psalm 51:11—David pleads with God not to take his Holy Spirit from him.
- These Spiritual realities had an impact and implications for Israel's prayer life. In the Old Testament, those who honored and obeyed God found their way to certain places to pray—places where the presence of God was said to dwell, places like the Temple.
- Acts 3:1—there were specific hours and places where prayers were to be offered.
- Daniel 6:10—Daniel prays toward Jerusalem 3 times a day.
- Psalm 55:17—how often was Daniel praying? What were the disciples doing in Acts 3:1? They were praying in line with how Israel was supposed to pray.
- Matthew 6:6—we no longer need to find secret places to pray to pray.
- One of the first things Paul teaches us is that prayer is much more than a spiritual discipline to be entered into during certain times and seasons. It should instead be a close and as regular as your breath, integrated into every fiber of your being.
- Because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit the place of prayer is now within the believer—with you—in every step as you carry out your ambassadorship in Christ's stead.
- As breathing is crucial to your life in the natural, so prayer is crucial to your spiritual life.
- Romans 12:12—in our fast food, instant gratification society this verse ought to make sense to us.
- “instant” means to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing, to continue all the time in one place
 - Romans 13:6—attending continually upon is the same Greek word translated instant in Romans 12:12
- Philippians 4:6-7—Paul's formula is simple. Have a concern? Pray right then and there.

Instant Prayer in Action

- Think for a moment about how many people and how many churches Paul had to pray for. Paul’s habit must have been that as he thought of someone, he would instantly make mention of them to God. It may have been a short one-sentence prayer or perhaps more, but it seems certain that Paul didn’t stop and pray an hour or so for each person every day.
- Philippians 1:3—upon every remembrance of you
- II Timothy 1:3—remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day
- Romans 1:9—make mention of you in my prayers
- Ephesians 1:16—making mention of you in my prayers
- I Thessalonians 1:2—making mention of you in our prayers
- Philemon 4—making mention of thee always in my prayers
- Paul’s epistles confirm that Paul did not pray for people only when they needed prayer. Throughout his letters we see Paul praying for the member of Christ’s church each time he heard reports of their love and faith, good report, reports that they were doing well. He didn’t wait for prayer requests; instead he prayed a short prayer, “making mention of them” whenever they came to mind. To think of them was to pray for them.
- How greatly would such an approach to prayer for others and our church revolutionize our lives and our assembly?

The Order of Prayer

- I Timothy 2:1-2, 8-- While ever concern or worry is an instant call to prayer, something that should allow you to live constantly in God’s peace, Paul also teaches that we should pray for other regularly regardless of our own situations.
 - Supplications—need, want, privation, a seeking, asking, or entreating of God or man.
 - Philippians 1:4—“requests”
 - Intercessions—a request concerning others on their behalf
 - Giving of Thanks—thankfulness, to give thanks
- Why should we pray for our leaders? “That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” Paul wrote these words from prison on the eve

of the first major Roman persecution of Christians under Nero as he understood the hindrance leaders could be to the Gospels flowing in any area, and the power they had to obstruct even those living honest and godly lives.

- Almost everywhere Paul mentions prayer in his letters, he also discusses thanksgiving, as if the two were inseparable. While prayer may start with supplications, and then move on to intercessions, for Paul, time in prayer always began and ended with thanksgiving.
- Colossians 4:2—watch in the same with thanksgiving

Paul's Holy Spirit-Inspired Prayers

- Romans 8:26-27—the intercession of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is like something else in the passage.
- Romans 8:16—the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.
- In the same manner, God the Holy Spirit communes and makes intercession our spirit to fix the problem of our ignorance and help us pray according to the will of God.
- The will of God is found in the Word of God which is what makes the prayers of Paul so precious. Paul wrote his letters to the churches through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, his prayers in these letters are literally the words of the Holy Spirit praying through Paul.
- For each thing the Holy Spirit taught through Paul, He quickened a spiritual muscle within the believer—a muscle that would be exercised and trained by reading Paul's epistles.
- Simple stated, we have in black and white on the pages of Scriptures through the pen of the Apostle Paul, God the Holy Spirit's prayers for the Body of Christ.
- If the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God which is found in the word of God, studying these prayers contains the potential to fix the problem of our ignorance about how to pray and unleash a powerful working in our lives as believers.
- Index of Pauline Prayer
- Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul

Index of Pauline Prayer

These indices are taken and adapted from a book entitled *Discover the Power in the Prayers of Paul* by David Bordon

All of the Prayers of Paul: In the Order They Appear in the New Testament

Topic	Passage Location
Paul's prayer to be saved	Acts 9:5-6 (repeated in Acts 22:8, 10; 26:15)
"That I might come unto you"	Romans 1:9-10
A Prayer that Israel Would Be Saved	Romans 10:1
A Prayer for Unity	Romans 15:5-6
A Prayer for Hope	Romans 15:13
"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen"	Romans 15:33
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Romans 16:20, 24
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	Romans 16:25-27
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Corinthians 1:4-9
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	I Corinthians 16:23-24
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving "Blessed be the God of all comfort"	II Corinthians 1:3-5
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Corinthians 2:14
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Corinthians 9:15
"I pray to God that you do no evil"	II Corinthians 13:7-9
A Benediction—"His Presence be with you"	II Corinthians 13:14
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Galatians 1:3-5
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Galatians 6:18
A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation	Ephesians 1:15-23
A Prayer for Spiritual Strength	Ephesians 3:14-21
A Benediction—Peace, Love with Faith, and Grace be with you	Ephesians 6:23-24
A Prayer of Guidance	Philippians 1:9-11
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving—"To God be the glory"	Philippians 4:20
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Philippians 4:23
A Prayer for Right Priorities	Colossians 1:2-4
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Colossians 4:18
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Thessalonians 1:2-4
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Thessalonians 2:13
A Prayer for Abounding Love	I Thessalonians 3:11-13
A Prayer for Total Sanctification	I Thessalonians 5:23-24
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	I Thessalonians 5:28
A Prayer for Fulfilling Purpose	II Thessalonians 1:11-12
A Prayer for Steadfastness in the Truth	II Thessalonians 2:16-17

A Prayer for Patience	II Thessalonians 3:5
A Prayer for Peace	II Thessalonians 3:16
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	II Thessalonians 3:18
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Timothy 1:12
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Timothy 1:17
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Timothy 6:15-16
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	I Timothy 6:21
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Timothy 1:3
A Prayer for Onesiphorus	II Timothy 1:16-18
A Prayer for Justice	II Timothy 4:14-16
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Timothy 4:18
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	II Timothy 4:22
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Titus 3:15
A Prayer for Effective Faith	Philemon 4-6
A Benediction—"Grace be with you"	Philemon 25

Paul's Prayers Classified by Category and Topic

Power Prayers

Topic	Passage Location
A Prayer for Abounding Love	I Thessalonians 3:11-13
A Prayer for Effective Faith	Philemon 4-6
A Prayer for Fulfilling Purpose	II Thessalonians 1:11-12
A Prayer of Guidance	Philippians 1:9-11
A Prayer for Hope	Romans 15:13
A Prayer for Patience	II Thessalonians 3:5
A Prayer for Peace	II Thessalonians 3:16
A Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation	Ephesians 1:15-23
A Prayer for Right Priorities	Colossians 1:2-4
A Prayer for Spiritual Strength	Ephesians 3:14-21
A Prayer for Steadfastness in the Truth	II Thessalonians 2:16-17
A Prayer for Total Sanctification	I Thessalonians 5:23-24
A Prayer for Unity	Romans 15:5-6

Minor Prayers

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"That I might come unto you"	Romans 1:9-10
A Prayer that Israel Would Be Saved	Romans 10:1
"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen"	Romans 15:33
"I pray to God that you do no evil"	II Corinthians 13:7-9
A Prayer for Justice	II Timothy 4:14-16
A Prayer for Onesiphorus	II Timothy 1:16-18

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	Romans 16:25-27
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Corinthians 1:4-9
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving “Blessed be the God of all comfort”	II Corinthians 1:3-5
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Corinthians 2:14
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Corinthians 9:15
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving—“To God be the glory”	Philippians 4:20
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Thessalonians 1:2-4
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Thessalonians 2:13
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Timothy 1:12
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Timothy 1:17
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	I Timothy 6:15-16
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Timothy 1:3
A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving	II Timothy 4:18

Benedictions

A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	Romans 16:20, 24
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	I Corinthians 16:23-24
A Benediction—“His Presence be with you”	II Corinthians 13:14
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	Galatians 1:3-5
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A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	Colossians 4:18
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	I Thessalonians 5:28
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	II Thessalonians 3:18
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	I Timothy 6:21
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	II Timothy 4:22
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	Titus 3:15
A Benediction—“Grace be with you”	Philemon 25