

Sunday, June 21, 2009—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Philippians 1:9-11—A Prayer for Abounding Effectual Love

Introduction

- This morning we are going to be looking at our fourth prayer in our series Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul.
- In Philippians 1 Paul offers a prayer for the church a Philippi and therefore us to Abounding Effectual Love or an increasing love that works.

Overview of Prayer

- Paul prays the following on behalf of the Philippians.
- That your love may abound more and more:
 - in knowledge
 - in all judgment
- That ye may approve things that are excellent
- That ye may be sincere and without offence until the day of Christ
- Be filled with all the fruits of righteousness

Philippians 1:9

- “And this I Pray,” indicates that Paul was continuing to make constant mention of the Philippians in his prayers.
 - Philippians 1:3-4—in verses 9-11 we learn what Paul prayed continually on their behalf.
- “that your love may abound more and more”
- Love—comes for the Greek word agape which means affection, good will, or brotherly love.

- I Corinthians 13—these are the characteristics of the love Paul is speaking about in Philippians 1:9
- Romans 5:8—this is the love Christ demonstrated on our behalf when he died for us on the cross.
- II Corinthians 5:14—this is the love that should motivate and constrain us in our Christian walk and service.
- Abound—carries the following meanings:
 - to exceed a fixed number of measure
 - a thing which comes in abundance, or overflows unto one, something falls to the lot of one in large measure
 - to be abundantly furnished with
- Yet—implies that the Philippians already loved one another. Since love is a quantitative entity there is always room for improvement.
- Taken together Paul is praying that the Philippians abound, increase, or grow beyond their present status of love.
- More and more—this duplication suggests that this increase in love does not take place instantaneously, but ideally it should progressively grow in the process of time. In other words our love for each other as a church ought to be maturing as time goes by.
- In the first part of the verse, Paul is emphasizing the quantitative aspect of love, however, in the last part his emphasis is on the qualitative aspect of love. We need to be careful not to divide the extent of their love from the nature of their love. Paul is not interested in them just having more love, but more love of a given kind.
- In knowledge—means a precise and correct knowledge
 - Ephesians 1:17—remember what we said a couple weeks ago about the connection between wisdom and revelation when it comes knowing God.
 - Wisdom = the wisdom of God in a mystery
 - Revelation = the revelation of the mystery and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to this now time revelation.
 - Colossians 2:2—“acknowledging of the mystery”
 - I Timothy 2:4—“knowledge of the truth”

- II Timothy 2:25—“acknowledging of the truth”
 - II Timothy 3:7—“knowledge of the truth”
 - Titus 1:1—“ acknowledging of the truth”
- This word is used some 15 times by Paul with respect to the mystery truth revealed for the Church. This means that he is praying that their love might increase in the sphere of the truth given to the Church.
 - In all judgment—carries the following meanings
 - The act of judging; the act or process of the mind in comparing its ideas, to find their agreement or disagreement, and to ascertain truth; or the process of examining facts and arguments, to ascertain propriety and justice; or the process of examining the relations between one proposition and another.
 - In Scripture, the spirit of wisdom and prudence, enabling a person to discern right and wrong, good and evil.
 - When you hear teaching made judgments and discern whether or not what you are hearing is correct or not. Paul’s desire it that our love may abound more and more in the area of being able to perceive and discern the Truth of the Gospel of Grace.

Philippians 1:10

- Once again the use of the word “that” is going to tell us the purpose and the intent of what was just said.
- Approve—means to
 - to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals
 - to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy
- Romans 2:18—“approvest the things that are more excellent”
- Romans 12:1-2—“prove”
- I Corinthians 3:13—“shall try” the fire is testing the quality of your work.
- II Corinthians 13:5—“prove your own selves”

- I Thessalonians 5:21—“prove all things”
- What is it that we are supposed to be approving the things that are excellent?
- Excellent—carries the following meaning:
 - to differ, to test, prove, the good things that differ,
 - to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful, to approve of things that excel, to differ from one
- The idea here is that as we exercise judgment by approving and proving things there will be clear discernable differences that will emerge. As believes we should seek and follow after the things that are most excellent.
- I Corinthians 15:31—“differeth from”
- Matthew 10:31—“are of more value”
- I Corinthians 12:31—there is a better way than following after gifts that are going to cease, fail, and be done away.
- I Corinthians 10:23—approving the things that are excellent is discerning what edifies and what does not and then choosing to follow after the things that edify and build up.
 - Romans 14:19
 - Romans 15:2—the issue
- Romans 12:2—notice that it is only through renewing your mind that we prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.
 - Good-- of good constitution or nature, useful, salutary, good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy, excellent, distinguished, upright, honorable
 - Acceptable-- well pleasing
 - Perfect—brought to its end, finished, lacking nothing necessary for completeness,
 - Used of men—full grown, adult, of full age, mature
- Philippians 1:9-10—Paul is praying that their love would abound more and more in knowledge and all judgment so they can make mature adult decision in the faith.