

Sunday, September 13, 2008—Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul—Paul’s Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

Introduction

- This past summer we have been studying the Prayers of the Apostle Paul. We have done so under the premise that we can learn how to pray by looking at how and what Paul prayed for the churches.
- This morning we are going to conclude this study by looking at Paul’s Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving as well as making some concluding observations and remarks.

Praise and Thanksgiving

- The Index of Pauline Prayer that I passed out during the introduction to this study listed 13 prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving. The index is still available online.
- One of the most wonderful things about Paul’s prayers is that they consistently begin with praise and worship and end with praise and thanksgiving.
- Many of Paul’s prayers were beautifully cast expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They seem to flow forth almost spontaneously out of the fullness of Paul’s love for Christ and his appreciation for what He had done for us.
- Ephesians 5:19-20—“giving thanks always for all things unto God. . .”
- Colossians 3:15, 17
- I Thessalonians 5:18

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

- Romans 16:25-27—we forget that these wonderful verses are Paul closing prayer for this epistle.
- Paul praises God for his wisdom in keeping the mystery a secret since the world began until revealing it to the Apostle Paul.

- I Corinthians 1:4-9—Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians in response to problems he learned they were having in their walk with Christ. He could have opened his letter to them with a rebuke for their foolishness.
- Instead he chooses to begin his letter with praise for the God who called them into light in the first place and who was still doing remarkable things through them.
- II Corinthians 2:14
- I Thessalonians 1:2-4—Paul also thanks God for the faithfulness of others.
- I Thessalonians 2:13—what is Paul’s glory and joy? I Thess. 2:19-20—the saints in the presence of Christ at his coming.
- I Timothy 1:17—Paul offers glory to God for his greatness
- Pressing through to praise. While Paul faced many hardships in his ministry, more than most of us will ever dream of facing, he always pushed through in his prayers to the point of praising God again for his glory and wisdom. He stayed in prayer until God so filled his heart that nothing else could pour forth but worship, praise, and thanksgiving.

Concluding Thoughts

- Prayer is a dispensational topic. Our prayer life today as members of the Body of Christ functions differently from Israel’s in time past.
- When Israel had broken the law and was living in sin God would not even hear their prayers:
 - Psalms 66:18
 - Proverbs 15:29
 - Isaiah 59:1-2
- Romans 5:1-2--All our sins have been forgiven. We have God’s very righteousness imputed to our account (justification). Therefore, we have direct and uninhibited access to God at all times through prayer. We enjoy and intimacy with God that Israel never possessed.
- Because the Holy Spirit permanently indwells and seals believers today in the dispensation of Grace Paul offers a completely new paradigm for prayer.

- I Thessalonians 5:17—Pray without ceasing.
 - Acts 3:1—under the Law there were specific hours and places where prayers were to be offered.
 - Daniel 6:10—Daniel prayers 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.
 - 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.
- Romans 12:12—tells us to continue instant in prayer, “instant” means to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing, to continue all the time in one place.
 - Romans 1:9—”make mention of you in my prayers”
 - Ephesians 1:16—”making mention of you in my prayers”
 - Philippians 1:3—”upon every remembrance of you”
 - I Thessalonians 1:2—”making mention of you in our prayers”
 - II Timothy 1:3—”remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day”
 - Philemon 4—”making mention of thee always in my prayers”
- For Paul think about someone was an opportunity to bring them before the throne of Grace.
- Let’s look back at the prayer overviews to recall what we have learned. Remember that these prayers were written by inspiration and reflect not just Paul’s heart for the body of Christ but the Holy Spirit as well.
- PowerPoint review
- Observations:
 - Everything single thing that Paul prays for the churches is spiritual in nature and concerns their inner man.
 - Rather than praying for stuff. Paul prays that the saints would be patient and learn how to be content regardless of their physical state.

- Philippians 4:6-7—Paul’s paradigm for prayer is simple: Have a concern? Pray right then and there.
- Notice that the promise is not that you will get everything you ask for. Rather that the peace of God will keep you heart and mind. Keep means to guard or the set a military watch over your heart and mind.
- The practical working of this verse is determined by your thought life. Your emotions will respond to what you think about.
- If you think on the things in verse 8 your will not be full of care in verse 6. Knowing that the peace of God which comes from the God of peace which passes understanding will keep your heart and mind.
- II Timothy 2:22—we need to run after God’s peace. Believers ought to be the most peaceful people you know.
- Ephesians 6:15—we need to suit up and put on the peace of God. There is nothing that the adversary would like more than to steal the peace from your home, family, and the assembly. If there is no peace in your life it is difficult to be an ambassador for the gospel of peace.
- We need to make Paul’s prayers our prayers.