

Sunday, January 19, 2020—Colossians 1:9 Further Thoughts on Pauline Prayer

Introduction/Review

- Two weeks ago, before the annual meeting we looked at the first half of Colossians 1:9. Twice in the first 9 verses of chapter 1 Paul has brought up the issue of prayer.
 - Colossians 1:3—“praying always for you”
 - Colossians 1:9—“do no cease to pray for you”
- In relation to Paul’s statement in verse 9 we looked at what “praying without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17) and “instant” prayer (Rom. 12:12; 13:6—“attending continually upon”) might look like in a practical sense by looking at Paul’s example.
 - I Corinthians 3:16—the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit has changed all of the rules when it comes to prayer. Because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the place of prayer is now within the believer—in his or her inner man. Just as breathing is critical for the proper function of your natural life so is prayer critical for the proper function of your spiritual life as a member of the body of Christ. 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.
 - Rom. 1:9, Eph. 1:16, Phil. 1:3, I Thess. 1:2, II Tim. 1:3, Philemon 4—all of these verses use some form of “make mention of you in my prayers” or “upon every remembrance of you.”
 - Mention—“A hint; a suggestion; a **brief notice or remark expressed in words or writing**; used chiefly after make.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Paul does not make a long-winded dissertation on behalf of the saints. Rather he makes mention of them, i.e., a brief remark on their behalf.
 - The fact that the King James translators rendered the Greek word variously as “mention” and “remembrance” indicates a connection between these two concepts. Before I can “make mention” of a particular saint or assembly don’t I first have to be holding that saint or assembly in “remembrance.” To hold them in “remembrance” is synonymous with “making mention” of them. This means that Pauline prayer is more of a spiritual state of mind than an outward religious activity.
- I am **NOT SAYING** that:

- Prayer **IS NEVER** oral—sometimes it is.
 - Prayer **IS NEVER** public—sometimes it is.
 - Prayer **IS NEVER** long—sometimes it is.
 - Prayer **IS NEVER** hard—it often is.
 - One should **NEVER** keep or maintain a “prayer list” or list of prayer requests—if it helps you keep people and issues in your “remembrance” maybe you should.
- What **I AM SAYING**:
 - Pauline Prayer **SHOULD BE** continual— i.e., “without ceasing,” and “instant” or “continually attended” unto
 - Pauline Prayer **IS NOT PRIMARILY** a physical religious activity— i.e., hands folded, eyes closed, head bowed
 - Pauline Prayer **IS PRIMARILY** a spiritual state of mind—i.e., “remembrance”
 - Pauline Prayer **CAN BE SHORT, SWEET, AND TO THE POINT**—i.e., “make mention”
 - Pauline Prayer **IS THE BELIEVERS PRIMARY** means of communion with God and serves as a point of contact between the believer and God’s written word.
 - Pauline Prayer **SHOULD NOT BE** a source of care, worry, or anxiety—Rather prayer was given to combat care, worry, and anxiety in the lives of believers, according to Philippians 4:6.
 - Romans 8:15—a believer talking to God in prayer can have all familiarity and intimacy of you talking to your dad, your spouse, or your best friend. Today, during the dispensation of grace, as members of the body of Christ we have the privilege of having direct access to the lap of our heavenly father via prayer.

Colossians 1:9

- **For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**
- Two weeks ago, we broke down verse 9 into its respective pieces before assembling them as a whole in order to ascertain what Paul was driving at in this verse. What is the cause that Paul and Timothy upon hearing of the faith and love of the Colossians had not ceasing praying for them with respect to? The answer is found in the second half of verse 9 and extends to the end over verse 12 at a minimum.
 - “be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”
 - “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing”
 - “be fruitful in every good work”
 - “increasing in the knowledge of God”

- “strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness”
- “giving thanks unto the father”
- This passage is not merely Paul’s prayer for the Colossians. Is more than that. It is God the Holy Spirit’s inspired prayer for the Colossians penned and recorded for us by the Apostle Paul. Paul’s epistles are peppered with the Holy Spirit’s inspired prayers for the body of Christ.
- Back in 2009 I taught a series titled, *Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul* in which we studied many of these prayers with the primary focus of letting Paul, our apostle, teach us how to pray.
 - Look at the *Index of Pauline Prayer*
- Notice that the primary focus of many of these prayers is on inner man issues and the spiritual mind set of believers. Why would this be? Because Paul knew and understood that the thing that is still in process in our mind.
 - II Corinthians 4:16—your inward man, the core of who you are is renewed day by day by God the Holy Spirit.
 - Romans 12:2—our hearts are not in process, but our heads are. We battle conformity to the world (the default setting) by being transformed (*metamorphoō*) by the renewing of the mind. The renewing of the mind transforms the carnal brain into a servant of righteousness by establishing new pathways in the brain that are tuned into God’s word and who God has made us in Christ.
- Romans 8:15—in this verse we are the one’s crying “Abba Father.” Why? How? Because God the Holy Spirit is in your heart also crying “Abba Father” all the time.
- Romans 8:16—the Holy Spirit “beareth witness” with spirit that I am child of God. The verb translated “beareth witness” is in the present tense, the active voice, and the indicative mood. Which means that right now in the present God the Holy Spirit is communicating my spirit in my inner man.
- Romans 8:26-27—God the Holy Spirit is constantly advocating for God’s truth in our lives. The expression “maketh intercession” is also in the present tense, the active voice, and the indicative mood. The Holy Spirit is always interceding on our behalf on a soulful inner man level.
- I can’t explain everything about prayer and how it works. Here is what I do know.
 - Paul, my apostle, instructs me to pray without ceasing.
 - Paul followed his own advice and prayed without ceasing.

- Let the Holy Spirit's prayers for the body of Christ recorded in Paul's epistles teach us where our greatest areas of need reside so that we can focus our prayers accordingly.
- Realize that we can pray for anything especially those things causing us anxiety and worry.
- The Holy Spirit knows that I sometimes don't know what to pray for, so he actively makes intercession for me.
- Just do it! Stop trying to figure out every detail about how it works and just do it.