



Paul's Passionate Prayers "Praying For One Another"

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

The Church at Thessalonica was a very young Church, but also a very active Church, especially in their mission to spread the gospel.

- In 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10, Paul commended them for the way they had become a ***“Model to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia. Your faith in God has become known to everybody.”***

But the Church was going through some very tough times.

- The members were suffering severe persecution, primarily by hostile mobs of unbelieving Jews and some of their fellow gentile citizens.
- The members were trying to resolve the doctrinal confusion around the rapture of the Church and the return of Jesus Christ.
- This not only affected the testimony of the Church, but it also discredited the gospel.
- Paul had to exercise his apostolic authority and command them to resolve that issue.
- He wasn't worried about the persecution they were enduring, for that could only strengthen their faith. But he was concerned about the focus on the rapture and return of Christ, for the spread of the gospel had ceased.

At least seven times in the New Testament, Paul asked those to whom he was writing to pray for him.

- Romans – prayers for deliverance
- 1 Corinthians – prayers for deliverance from deadly peril
- Ephesians – prayers that he would boldly proclaim the gospel
- Philippians – prayers for deliverance
- Colossians – prayers for God to open a door for the gospel
- 1 Thessalonians – prayer for him personally
- In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul said we should not let the sun go down on our anger, but the same could be said about praying for those on our prayer list.

Paul made two prayer requests:

1. Paul prayed for the Word of God to speed ahead of him.

- The Church Fathers translated these words to say, “that the Word of the Lord might have free course; that it may move forward unencumbered; that there would be nothing that would stand in its way; that the Word would actually go ahead with any hindrance, without barrier.
- Psalm 147:15 – ***“He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.”***
- Paul prayed that the Word of God would move swiftly to accomplish its purpose – even to go before the workers.
- Paul said the actual work of the gospel could run ahead of the missionaries on the wings of the prayers of those who had a personal relationship with God.
- Paul is praying that the message of the gospel would be received, understood, believed, and acted upon, even before he and his men arrived in a city, so that the gospel would be glorified as the power of God unto salvation, and

transformation, and not just a religious philosophy of life.

- Notice how Paul connected the spread of the gospel with the doctrine of divine election, for the only way we can know who the elect are is by their response to the proclamation of the gospel.
- 1 Corinthians 15:34 – ***“Awake unto righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”***
- D.L. Moody – **“Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.”**
 - Acts 1-3 – after the 11 disciples, Mary the mother of Jesus, His brothers, and another 120 men, ***“Continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,”*** the Holy Spirit came and anointed them to preach the gospel.
 - The first Great Awakening and the revivals that followed were spawned by a small group prayer meeting in New York City.

2. Paul prayed that God would deliver His people from wicked and evil men.

- Paul was well aware that wherever the Word of God went, there were always those who aggressively opposed it. So, Paul prayed for God’s divine deliverance from those who would oppose the work of the Word of God.
- According to Open Doors, the mission organization that tracks persecution across the world, one out of seven Christians lives under severe persecution in the world today.
- There are as many as 400,000 secret believers in North Korea. If they are discovered, they could be treated as criminals, deported to clandestine labor camps, or shot as political criminals.
- However, we must notice that Paul’s first prayer request was for the Word of God to spread, and his second request was for the workers to be delivered from wicked and evil men.

Paul ended his second request with a brief request for prayer for himself, then turns his heart back to the Thessalonians.

- ***“The Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”***
- ***“We have the confidence in the Lord...that you will do the things we command you.”***
- Paul was not focused on himself: he was focused on those he has been called to serve, and that’s the essential priority of a Pastor, and God will hold pastors accountable.

How to access the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells us:

- **Confession of all known sins** – with repentance, restoration, and reconciliation where possible.
- **Surrender of our will unto God’s will** – we must get ourselves to a place where we have no will of our own.
- **Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill us** – to anoint our minds with God’s truth; to fill our hearts with God’s love, and to stir up the gift He has entrusted to us.
- **Obey the Word as God speaks to you** – never doubting or wavering – trust and obey.