

6/12/22

Prayer For Enablement
Eph. 3:14-15

Paul directed by the Holy Spirit delayed his prayer to reveal information about his person, focusing on the messenger of the gospel. Eph. 3:1-7

Paul also revealed vital information about his “ministry of the gospel”, focusing on the content of the gospel. Eph. 3:8-13

1. His first prayer was for the illumination of the revelation. Eph. 1:15-23
2. His second prayer was for the enabling and empowerment of their lives. vs. 14-21

Now comes the prayer of Paul for enablement is laid out in three parts. Eph. 3:14-21

- I. The introduction to prayer. vs. 14-15
- II. The intercession of prayer. vs. 16-19
- III. The veneration in prayer. vs. 20-21

We want to look at the introduction of the prayer of Paul, that consists of three things: Eph. 3:14-15

- I. The posture before God in prayer. vs. 14
- II. The person of God petitioned in prayer. vs. 14
- III. The people of God affected by prayer. vs. 15

I. The posture before God in prayer. vs. 14

A. The apostle Paul declared the reason for his prayer.

* “For this reason.”

1. Paul now returns to his original intent to pray for the Ephesians.
 - a. The phrase for this reason “toutou charin” points us back to verse one of the chapter. Eph. 3:1a
 - 1) The phrase is exactly the same.
 - 2) These are the only two times it appears in the epistle.
 - b. The reason Paul was praying regarded the salvation of the Gentiles. Eph. 3:1b
 - 1) He was in prison in Rome for preaching the Gentiles could be saved, “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.” Eph. 3:1b
 - 2) His sufferings were for the benefit of the Gentiles. Eph. 3:13
 - c. Paul was commissioned to make know this mystery in Christ hidden in ages past, but now had been made known to the sons of men by the Holy Spirit and the apostles and prophets. Eph. 3:4-5
 - 1) “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” Eph. 2:19
 - 2) “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus

Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone.*” Eph. 2:20

- 3) “In whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.” Eph. 2:21
- 4) “In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Eph. 2:22

B. The apostle Paul described his physical posture as he prayed.

* “I bow my knees.”

1. The expression is called a metonym.
 - a. A metonym is a phrase that is used to substitute one thing for another that is closely associated.
 - 1) In this case is the phrase “I bow my knee” indicates and means prayer.
 - 2) The word bow “kampto”, means to bend and depicts an attitude of honor and respect to a superior.
 - b. The posture of kneeling indicates intensity, urgency in humble submission.
 - 1) Stephen knelt as he was being stoned. Acts 7:60
 - 2) Peter knelt as he prayed for Tabitha. Acts 9:40
 - 3) Paul knelt to pray with the Ephesian elders. Acts 20:36
 - 4) Our Lord knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane. Lk. 22:41

2. There are other postures in prayer revealed in the Scriptures.
 - a. The most usual posture by Jewish Hebrews was to pray standing.
 - 1) “And when you **pray**, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to **pray** standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” Matt. 6:5
 - 2) “Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up to the temple to **pray**, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ‘I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” Lk. 18:9- 13
 - b. The posture of prayer standing and kneeling with hands uplifted to God.
 - 1) “Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the

- assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven.” 1Kings 8:22
- 2) “And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from **kneeling** on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.” 1Kings 8:54
- 3) “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his **knees** three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” Dan. 6:10
- 4) “At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my **knees** and spread out my hands to the LORD my God.” Ezra 9:5
- c. The posture of being prostrated or face to the ground.
- 1) “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and **prayed**, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” Matt. 26:39
- 2) “And being in agony, He **prayed** more earnestly. Then His sweat became like

great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Lk. 22:44

Illustration

E.M. Bounds said this about prayer and the church, “When the church is in the condition of prayer God’s cause always flourishes and His kingdom on earth always triumphs. When the church fails to pray, God’s cause decays and evil of every kind prevails. A prayerless pastor, church and Christian are denying God’s ability to direct and provide and man’s privilege to ask and receive.”

Application

One of the best ways to learn to pray is by knowing the word of God and studying the prayers in the Bible.

- a. Our prayers being founded on the past works of God in admiration and gratitude, resulting in our confidence in God.
 - b. Our prayers being what pleases Him, according to His promises and will.
 - * “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” 1Jn. 5:14
2. The outward physical posture is rejected by God and not honored if the posture of our heart is not humble and genuine.
- a. “The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, A broken and a **contrite** heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.” Ps. 51:17

- b. “So rend your **heart**, and not your **garments**; Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.” Joel 2:13
 - c. “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see* as man sees; for man **looks** at the outward appearance, but the LORD **looks** at the **heart**.” 1Sam. 16:7
3. Paul commanded three things to the Thessalonians though they had experienced difficult lives. 1Thess. 5:16-18
- a. Regarding their attitude, “Rejoice always.” vs.16
 - b. Regarding their prayers, “pray without ceasing.” vs. 17
 - c Regarding their gratefulness, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” vs. 18
4. Paul gave the Philippians important spiritual council involving prayer by Paul. Phil. 4:6-7
- a. We are to bring all things to God in prayer, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,” vs. 6a-c
 - b. We are to obey and pray, “let your requests be made known to God.” vs. 6d
 - c. We will reap the benefit of protecting our hearts and minds, “and the peace of God, which

surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” vs. 7

The posture before God the Father was kneeling!

II. The person of God petitioned in prayer. vs. 14

* “to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- A. The apostle Paul addressed his prayer to the First person of the God-head, the “Father”.
 - 1. The Father is said to be the Father of Jesus from His Divine nature from eternity and revealed in the Incarnation.
 - a. The phrase to the Father “pros pater”, means to face the male ancestor.
 - 1) The Father is responsible as the source in Jesus becoming a man.
 - 2) There is a play on words Father “pater” and family “patria”, united by common descent.
 - b. Jesus was God and He took on flesh in the Incarnation. Jn. 1:1, 14
 - * But this does not infer or teach that Jesus is a created being, but only affirms His eternal pre-existence.
 - 2. Jesus is the Second person of the Trinity co-equal with the Father.
 - a. Paul clearly says it at the start and end of the letter. Eph. 1:2; 6:23

- b. Matthew believed Jesus was God, “You shall call his name Emmanuel”, God with us, in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures. Matt. 1:23; Gen. 3:15; Is. 7:14; 9:6-7; Jn. 1:1
 - c. John says Jesus is the Son of the Father, the love gift given to the world that whoever believes should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jn. 3:16
 - c. Paul tells us Jesus is the only mediator of Jew and Gentile, for access to the Father by one Spirit. Eph. 2:18
 - d. Paul said, “giving thanks always for all things **to God the Father** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Eph. 5:20
3. Yet the Father is also said to be the God of Jesus from His human nature, since the Incarnation.
- a. This is stated twice in the first chapter of the letter. Eph. 1:3a, 17a
 - b. Jesus limited Himself for a set time, divesting Himself of His glory for the sake of becoming the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. Jn. 1:29; Phil. 2:5-11
 - c. Jesus came as the Last Adam, just like the First Adam to make reconciliation from the fall. 1Cor. 15:45
 - d. Jesus became a vicarious sacrifice as our substitute, dying on the cross instead and in place of sinners. 2Cor. 5:21

- d. Peter also expressed this gratitude, “**Blessed** *be the God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1Pet. 1:3
 - e. Jesus bore the wrath of God for the sins of the world. Ps. 22:1-4
- B. The apostle Paul declared his prayer to the Father according to the divine order in salvation.
1. The term in our context refers to the chain of command in the Trinity.
 - a. The Father is the source or origin.
 - b. The Son is the channel.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is the agent.
 - d. Three persons, yet one God, one Lord, one Spirit and one Savior!
 - e. Yet Father and Son are co-equal by the titles of God and Lord.
 2. The Father stands in the place of priority by the fact He is always mentioned first.
 - a. “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father** of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Eph. 1:17
 - b. Paul tells the Ephesians, “God (the Father) placed all things under His (Christ’s) feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, one

faith, one baptism; one God an Father of all, who is over all through all and n all”
Eph. 4:5-6

- c. The baptismal formula reveals it. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. Matt. 28:19
- d. The apostle Paul says, “There is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Chris, through whom are all things, and we exist through Him. 1Cor. 8:6
- e. “The God and **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.” 2Cor. 11:31
- f. “Whoever denies the Son does not have the **Father** either; he who acknowledges the Son has the **Father** also.” 1Jn. 2:23

Illustration

The priority of the Father and chain of command has nothing to do with inferiority, but efficiency and effectiveness for the benefit of the saints.

* “But I want you to know that the **head** of every man is Christ, the **head** of woman *is* man, and the **head** of Christ *is* God.” 2Cor. 11:3

Application

The Scriptures are clear when it comes to our prayers.

- a. We are to ask the Father for all things.
- b. We are to ask all things in the name of Jesus.
 - 1) “And whatever you **ask** in My name, that I will do, that the **Father** may be glorified in the Son. If you **ask** anything in My name, I will do *it*.” Jn. 14:13-14
 - 2) “And in that day you will ask **Me nothing**. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.” Jn. 16:23
- 2. The Scriptures imply emphatically that prayer is a picture of total dependency on God. Ps. 73:25-26
 - a. God was obscured by the prosperity, the evil and the difficulties of life, until he went into the sanctuary of the Lord.
 - b. God is to be our primary love: “Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.”
 - c. God is to be our primary strength; “My flesh and my heart fail: But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”
 - d. Prayer brought him back to reality!
- 3. The greatest authority is Jesus, listen to His words when His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.
 - * Jesus gave an example of prayer for content not a pattern, nor can it be the Lord’s prayer, for there are petitions for the forgiveness of sins. Matt. 6:5-13
 - a. Prayer is not to be used to bring attention to self in public, either by manner of delivery, superlatives uses or tone of voice. vs. 5

- b. Prayer is not for man's ear but God's, prying to God in secret, He will reward us openly. vs. 6
 - c. Prayer is not to be vain repetition, as many religions pray, a mantra or mere information, God is all knowing. vs. 7-8
 - d. Prayer is to be addressed and directed to the Father, "Our Father". vs. 9
 - e. For the Father's Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth, as in heaven. vs. 10
 - f. Dependency on the Father for our dependency for our daily bread. vs. 11
 - g. Asking forgiveness of our sins or debts, as we forgive our debtors, those who sin against us. vs. 12
* Forgiveness from sin is for salvation, as a Christian it is for ongoing fellowship.
 - h. Praying for deliverance from temptations and the evil one, Satan, acknowledging the Father's Kingdom, power and glory. vs. 13
* He will always come back at a more opportune time!
4. The Bible reveals it is a sin not to pray.
- a. The nation of Israel came to a place where they wanted a king like all the other nations and Samuel confronted and charged them.
* Samuel said, "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. 1Sam. 12:23
 - b. God told Jeremiah three times not to pray for the good of the people or intercede for them any more. Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11

The person of God petitioned in prayer was the Father!

III. The people of God affected by prayer. vs. 15

- * "from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."
- A. The apostle Paul is not teaching that everyone on earth is saved or will be in heaven.
1. Some people take this text to teach that all human being belong to the Fatherhood of God.
 - a. Therefore we are all saved.
 - b. Therefore we are all children of God.
 - c. Therefore we are all going to be in heaven.
 - d. No, the only common factor of believers and non-believer is that God created all of us, the "Creator-hood of man", not the "Fatherhood of God". Acts 17:28
 2. This teaching is called Universalism.
 - a. This theology is proposed by people who call themselves "Christians", but are not by what they believe.
 - 1) They translate the word whole "pas" every family, making it a plural, instead of one entire family.
 - 2) They expose themselves to be deceivers by their belief in Universalism.

- 3) They oppose the historical orthodox doctrine of Christianity for the last two-thousand years.
- b. This theology stands in contradiction to the recorded fall of Adam and the need of a Redeemer.
 - 1) They deny the holiness and truthfulness of God. Gen. 3
 - 2) They ignore and deny the prophetic promise of a personal Savior to die in the place of sinners. Gen. 3:15
- c. This theology is confusion to the testimony of God's distinctions in the whole of Scripture.
 - 1) The special choosing of Israel as His people and nation.
 - 2) The choosing of a bride by Jesus as His bride to be raptured before the seven year tribulation.
- d. This theology denies the seriousness of sin against God by sinfulness of every living person, as well as calling both the Father and the Son liars.
 - 1) Denying that all have sinned.
 - 2) Denying that the wages of sin is death.
 - 3) Denying the need of repentance through the new birth.
 - 4) Denying there is a heaven and hell, that humanity will go to one or the other, the final abode being Gehenna, the Lake of Fire.

- B. The apostle Paul is teaching that the family of God resides both in heaven and on earth.
 - * "from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."
 - 1. The statement of identification is ,“the whole family”, clearly indicates the family of God.
 - a. God had made Jew and Gentile one, in the family of God. Eph. 2:14
 - b. Both Jew and Gentile created in Jesus “one new man”. Eph. 2:15
 - c. Reconciled Jew and Gentile in one body. Eph. 2:16
 - d. Both had access to the Father by one Spirit. Eph. 2:18
 - e. The reason is they had been saved and all their sins of a person are forgiven and forgotten by God. Eph. 2:8-9; Ps. 103:12
 - 2. The statement location is “heaven and earth”.
 - a. This simply indicates that part of the family of God at the present is in heaven, the invisible church.
 - 1) Those who were sinners at one time on the earth, heard the gospel repented and became born again.
 - 2) Those who consequently through the new birth were transformed throughout their lives.

- 3) Those on earth who were witnesses for Jesus and sojourners on earth on their way to heaven.
 - 4) Those who came to the end of their lives and were present before God in heaven immediately.
 - 5) Those in heaven have any need of prayer, they are with God!
- b. This also indicates that part of the family of God at the present time is on the earth, the visible church.
- 1) Those who in the present generation have repented from their sins and been born again, trusting only the atoning work of Jesus.
 - 2) Those who at the present are to be growing, developing and maturing in their faith “in Christ”, prayer being of great benefit.
 - 3) Those who at the present are in “spiritual warfare” fighting the good fight of faith, through prayer, the word, the power of the Spirit with the whole armor and mind of Christ.
 - 4) Those who throughout their lives see themselves as sojourners, pilgrims, who will one day at death join the invisible church in heaven.
- c. This family both in heaven and earth is named after the Father.

- 1) The Father **is** the One responsible as the source for the family of God in a paternal sense by the new birth.
- 2) The family of God, adopted sons and daughters. Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5
- 3) The believers were also known as those on the Way, Christians! Jn. 14:6; Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22

Illustration

Ex-Pastor Rob Bell of MarsHill Church in his book “Love Wins” writes about heaven, hell, and the fate of every person who ever lived. He says Hell is what we create for ourselves when we reject God’s love. Hell is both a present reality for those who resist God and a future reality for those who die unready for God’s love. Hell is what we make of heaven when we cannot accept the good news of God’s forgiveness and mercy. But hell is not forever. Every sinner will turn to God and realize he has already been reconciled to God, in this life or in the next. There will be no eternal conscious torment. God says no to injustice in the age to come, but he does not pour out wrath (we bring the temporary suffering upon ourselves), and he certainly does not punish for eternity. In the end, love wins.” (Kevin DeYoung)

* This is not a person in the family of God, but a deceiver! Others are Brian McLaren, Mark Driscall, and many others of the EMCM, as well as Tony Jones, Tony Campollo teaching Kingdom or

Dominion Theology, that the church is going to bring in and set up the Kingdom.

Application

1. Jesus taught there is one church and He builds it.

* “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will **build** My **church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” Matt. 16:18

2. Paul taught there is one body, but many members in the one body, the church.

* “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” Rom. 12:3-5

3. Paul taught the Ephesians the same thing.

* “*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” Eph. 4:5-7

4. One family, the church in heaven and earth.

* “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are*

registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.” Heb. 12:22-23

The people of God affected by prayers are those still on earth!

Conclusion

This the introduction of the prayer of Paul, which consists of three things:

- I. The posture before God in prayer was kneeling!
- II. The person of God petitioned in prayer was the Father!
- III. The people of God affected by prayer are those still on earth!