

1/4/26

The Only True Help Is Prayer
2Thess. 3:1-2

The power of prayer is clearly revealed throughout the Scriptures yet for some reason, every generation is consistent in neglecting prayer and at time not believing it's benefits, altogether by not praying.

One day God was about to destroy Israel and Moses interceded for Israel.

“And now, I pray, let the power of my LORD be great, just as You have spoken, saying, The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.” Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. Then the LORD said: “I have pardoned, according to your word.” Nun. 14:17-20

Paul the apostle to the Gentiles has prayed for the Thessalonians, whom God has chosen for salvation, that He might strengthen them and continue to work in them and through them. 2Thess. 2:16-17

Paul knowing that he was no different than those he has just finished praying for and he now asks that the Thessalonians pray for them.

Paul has prayed for them three times already and is going to pray for them two more times before he signs the letter with his own hand. 2Thess. 1:3, 11; 2:16-17; 3:5, 16

Paul moved from the doctrinal section to the practical section. 2Thess. 2:1-17; 3:1-15

* This doesn't imply there is no doctrine being taught, but that the central focus of the section deals with the practical application to their local or life situation.

We want to look at Paul's prayer request for the preaching of the gospel that consists of three things. 2Thess. 3:1-2

- I. Paul requested prayer for the human instruments. vs. 1a-c
- II. Paul requested prayer for the word to be effective. vs. 1d-e
- III. Paul requested prayer for protection from evil men. vs. 2

I. Paul requested prayer for the human instruments. vs. 1a-c

- A. The request for prayer is prefaced by the word “finally”. vs. 1a
 - 1. The apostle is 2/3 through his letter.

- a. Paul had dealt with the crucial issues the “Day of the Lord”.
- b. Paul had reminded them of all he told them about the man of lawlessness.
- c. Paul had given thanks for their salvation and exhorted them to hold fast to the truth.

2. The word finally “liopen” literally means “for the rest” implying the remainder of the letter and could be translated moreover, furthermore or henceforth.

- a. The word can indicate the letter’s end.
- b. The word can indicate further material.
- c. The word is used by Paul in both ways.
 - 1) He uses it as a transition to introduce practical exhortation without implying the letter is coming to a close. Phil. 3:1; 1Thess. 4:1; 1Thess. 4:1
 - 2) He uses it to indicate the conclusion of the letter. 2Cor. 13:11; Eph. 6:10; Phil. 4:8
- d. The word finally is related to the previous section about their salvation. 2Thess. 2:13-17

B. The request for prayer is directed to his spiritual children.

* “Brethren”. vs. 1b

1. The word brethren “adelphos” as we have noted before means from the same womb.

- a. They belonged to the family of God, relating himself as their equal before God.
- b. They would be the best ones to intercede for Paul and his companions knowing their circumstances.
- c. The word brethren appears 19 times in the first letter and 9 times in the second.

2. The apostle portrays himself as a mere man.

- a. Paul was teaching them that our spiritual birth should produce humility in us, rather than self-exaltation.
- b. Paul was teaching them that no one is above or beyond the need of prayer.
- c. Paul was teaching them the ones who know you, should be the ones you should ask to pray for you.

C. The request for prayer is for his fellow servant, not just for himself.

* “Pray for us”. vs. 1c

1. Paul knew the needed dependence on God through prayer.

- a. The plan of God for the word of God must come from Him.
- a. The word for prayer “prosukomai” means to supplicate, worship and always used of God for prayer in general. Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18; Phil 1:9; 1Thess. 5:25

1) The Greek word pray is emphatic, in the present tense, continuously.

- 2) Jesus used the word for the believer praying in secret to God our Father. Matt. 6:6
- 3) Jesus used it praying to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matt. 26:36, 39, 41, 42, 44
- 4) The present tense calls for continued prayer on their behalf.
- b. The implication was that Paul, Timothy and Silas would hear the voice of God by their prayers to proclaim the gospel.
 - 1) For the directed place.
 - 2) For the directed time.
 - 3) For the directed people.
- c. The letters of Paul reveal his dependency of the prayers of the saints. Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:19; Phile. 22
 - 1) Paul clearly revealed the prayers of the Corinthians were responsible for his deliverance from death. 2Cor. 1:11
 - 2) The Thessalonians now had the right to go before the throne of grace and plead on their own behalf or others. Heb. 4:14-16
 - 3) The Thessalonians had been the very recipients of the apostle's prayers, while in his absence.
- 2. The apostle Paul was doing two things by requesting prayer from the Thessalonians.

- a. Paul was teaching them the proper attitude and perspective of a true servant to help others in their spiritual needs.
- b. Paul was teaching them no one member in the church body can do without the help of the other members of the body or think themselves to be more important.
 - * Paul, Silas and Timothy all needed help from heaven through the intercessory prayers of the saints!

Illustration

One day Spurgeon was asked the secret of his ministry. Without saying a word he took the man to a small room where people were praying for the word as it was being preached.

Application

- 1. We need to pray always revealing to God our awareness we cannot do His work in the energies of the flesh or everyone else God will use.
 - a. Paul said, “And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2Cor. 2:4-6
 - b. Paul again said, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted

me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.”

1Tim. 1:12-13

2. We need to pray continuously to not be discouraged or anxious in our service, the potential is in all of us.

- a. Jesus said, “Men ought always to pray and not lose heart. Lk. 18:1
- b. Paul said, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:6-7
- c. Paul told them in the First letter, “Pray without ceasing.” 1Thess. 5:17
- d. God said, “Call on Me and I will answer you, and I will show you great and mighty things which you know not.” Jer. 33:3

3. We need to pray to align ourselves with the will of God, not just to ask God to bless what we want to do for God.

- a. We are to pray according to the will of God, found in the word of God, then He will hear and answer our prayers. 1Jn. 5:13-14
- b. Daniel went to God in prayer to enquire how he might fit into the plans of God for Israel and God gave him the prophecy of the 70 Weeks regarding Messiah and Israel. Dan. 9

4. We need to pray continuously, especially after God uses us lest we forget who did it.

- a. “Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.” Prov. 16:18
- b. “For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not **received it**?” 1Cor. 4:7
- c. “But we have this **treasure** in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” 2Cor. 4:7
- d. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Eph. 6:18

5. We need to pray that we not be discouraged thinking God will not avenge His servants.

* “Then Jesus spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. “Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary....Shall God not avenge His elect who cry out day and night to him, though He bears long with them?’” Lk. 18:1-3

Paul requested prayer for the human instruments!

II. Paul requested prayer for the word to be effective.

A. The petition was that the word of God have victory in men's hearts. vs. 1d
 * “That the word of the Lord may run swiftly.”

1. The method was by “The Word of the Lord”, speaking of the gospel. 1Thess. 1:8; 4:15
 - a. Also called it the Word of God. 2Thess. 2:13
 - b. Also called the word of truth. Col. 1:5
2. The manner was for it to run swift.
 - a. The phrase run swift “treko” means to run and make rapid progress, being unhindered, emphatic in Greek.
 - 1) The word swift is italicized to indicate it has been added by the translators to communicate the intended meaning of the Greek.
 - b. Paul very possibly was combining the Old Testament imagery and the New Testament athletic imagery of a runner in the stadium. Ps. 147:15; Rom. 9:16; 1Cor. 9:24; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 2Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1
 - 1) Personifying the word of God or the gospel as running through the land having victory in the hearts of lost man by the prayers of the saints
 - 2) The verb is in the present tense, indicating continuous progress and winning their hearts.

B. The petition was that the word of God be embrace by sinners, as being God's word.
 * “and be glorified, just as it is with you.” vs. 1d

1. The outcome of the word of God running swiftly in the hearts of men, being victorious by being believed and glorified by them.
 - a. The word glorified “doxazo” means exalted with the idea of honored as the triumphal winner by virtue of its inherent quality, in the present tense and emphatic.
 - 1) Acknowledging that the word of God was God's revelation, not from man's.
 - 2) Acknowledging that it could do what it promised.
 - 3) Acknowledging the love of God by responding in gratitude.
 - 4) Acknowledging one day all will bow their knee to Christ as judge, if they do not bow now to be saved.
 - b. All three verbs pray, run and glorified are in the present, they were to pray continuously for effectiveness of the gospel. Acts 13:48-49
 - 1) Being welcomed into the heart, to convict sinners of sin and transgressions.
 - 2) Being regenerated and to trust it for salvation and ongoing transformation.

- 3) Being a witness of what God has done by changing their lives.
- 2. The example of the word being glorified was the Thessalonians, “just as it is with you.” vs. 1e
 - a. Paul said, “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” 1Thess. 1:8-10
 - b. The Thessalonians were the pattern of welcoming the gospel in their hearts wholeheartedly, walking worthy of the Kingdom and glory, “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, **you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**, which also effectively works in you who believe” so Paul wanted to see this repeated in other sinners, an unhindered reception of the gospel. 1Thess. 2:12-13

- c. The Thessalonians had the contagious disease.
- 1) The word ran swiftly, unhindered and triumphed over their lives of sin, convicting, saving and turning their lives around.
 - a) The effectiveness of the gospel into Europe was at the direction of God through prayer and obedience, not by Paul’s wisdom. Acts 16:11-17:9
 - b) They welcomed the word of God as divine revelation not man’s speculations. 1Thess. 2:13-14
- 2) God through the prophet Isaiah said, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Is. 55:11
 - a) The word of God judges a person of rebellion against God, for rejecting the word.
 - b) The word of God judges the person’s sins by repenting before God by receiving the word of the gospel.

Illustration

Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, “Chose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my

hand." So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and; when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." Ex. 17:8-13

Application

1. Our prayers for the gospel to reach people to be saved should always be part of our lives.
 - a. Knowing it is the heart of God. Jn. 3:16
 - b. Knowing God will bring people into our lives and put on our hearts to share the gospel with them, as the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8:26-38
 - c. Knowing God is not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance. 2Pet. 3:9
 - d. Knowing that Jesus could come back any time for His church in the rapture. 1Thess. 4:16-17
2. Our prayers should be that the word of the gospel be preached clearly, uncompromising and to all.
 - a. Paul says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23
 - b. John says, "For all are under God's wrath for their ongoing rebellion against God." Jn. 3:36

- c. John says, "For all are able to come to God, if they believe the message of the gospel and drink of the water of life freely." Rev. 20:17
3. Our prayers should be consistent and faithful for those who are lost. 1Thess. 5:17
 - a. Our family members.
 - b. Our friends.
 - c. Our fellow workers.
 - d. Our fellow leaders.
4. Our prayers should not cease once they are saved, but that the word be honored in their lives.
 - a. Peter says. "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious." 1Pet. 2:1-3
 - b. Paul gives the purpose of the church, "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the

effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. 4:12-16

- c. Trusting the word to do what it says it can do as I die to self, walk in the Spirit and yield to God’s agape love. Rom. 6:6, 11; Gal. 5:16-17, 22

Paul requested prayer for the word to be effective!

III. Paul requested prayer for protection from evil men. vs. 2

- A. Paul recognized their need of God’s preservation as they preached the gospel.
* “That we may be delivered.” vs. 2a
 - 1. The verb delivered “ruomai” has the idea of being rescued from danger, found 18 times in the New Testament.
 - a. The context is their rescue from hindering and endangering them from continuing to preach the gospel.
 - b. The word is used in the model prayer of Jesus, “deliver us from evil.” Matt. 6:13
 - c. The word is used by Paul of being personally delivered from dangerous situations. Rom. 15:31; 2Cor. 1:10; 2Tim. 4:16-18; 2Tim. 3:11
* Paul told Timothy, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” 2Tim. 3:12

- d. The word is used of eschatological deliverance, the Tribulation. 1Thess. 1:10
- 2. The verb deliver also has the definite article and the use of the aorist suggesting one particular act of deliverance.
 - a. He had experience hostility for preaching the gospel by the Jews and the governor of Damascus, under Aretas the king. Acts 9:22-24; 2Cor. 11:32
 - b. Paul was stoned at Lystra for preaching the gospel. Acts 14:19
 - c. Paul was at Corinth with great opposition and the Lord Jesus appeared to him told him to stop being afraid, but to speak boldly and not keep silent, He was with him, no one would harm him, Jesus had many people in the city. Acts 18:9-11
 - d. Then there is one account recorded when Paul was brought before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia by the Jews and God delivered him. Acts 18:12-17
 - e. Paul prayed that he be delivered from those in Judea who did not believe as he took the gift to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Rom. 15:31
- B. Paul identified the enemies of the gospel.
* “From unreasonable and wicked men.” vs. 2a
- 1. The men are identified as unreasonable in conduct.

- a. The word unreasonable “atopos” means that which is out of place, improper, outrageous or perverse.
- b. The word describes men capable of violent and harmful acts against others.
- c. The word appears three times in the New Testament.
 - 1) It is used by the thief on the cross of Jesus, “This man has done nothing amiss.” (KJV) Lk. 23:41
* In other words Jesus on the cross by His very nature was out of place!
 - 2) It is used of Paul when the viper bit him at the Island of Malta and didn’t die, the result of being out of place.
Acts 28:6
 - 3) It is used of men who are out of place when it comes to the gospel, not open.
Acts 17:5-10; 2Thess. 3:2
 - a) Being antagonistic, not open to the gospel.
 - b) Leaning to their understanding, rejecting the gospel.
 - c) Seeing it as their duty to oppose and attempt to hinder the gospel from reaching sinners.
 - d) This is the only occasion that it is used for people!
- 2. The men are also said to be wicked men in character.

- a. The word wicked “poneros” means an active evil which takes pleasure not only in the malicious evil done, but also in causing others to do evil and corrupting them by evil.
 - 1) The word appears 78 times in the New Testament.
 - 2) The word is used in the model prayer Jesus taught His disciples, “Deliver us from the evil one “poneros” Satan, the source of evil character and conduct. Matt. 6:13
* He is the god of this world who is affecting and influencing lost man on his bent towards evil, to hinder them from coming to the gospel. 2Cor. 4:4
 - 3) The word is used for the evil that comes forth from the heart of man.
Matt. 15:19
 - 4) The word is used for the present evil world. Gal. 1:4
 - 5) The word is used for the wicked one, Satan and Cain, that we have overcome. 1Jn. 2:13-14; 5:18-19
- b. There is only one article is for both adjectives, indicating one group.
 - 1) There were other categories of evil men, apart from “unreasonable wicked men”.

- 2) The diversity of hostility against the gospel can vary from simply rejecting it, to hateful violence.
- 3) Some of the greatest enemies have been intellectuals instigators, who have used the channels of education or legislation to oppose, hinder and eradicate Christianity.
- 4) The Judaizers at Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth are a good example of such men. Acts 17:5-9, 13-15; 18:12-17

C. Paul qualified the spiritual state of these men.

* “For not all have faith.” vs. 2b

- 1. The word faith “pistis” in it’s most basic meaning refers to conviction of the truth of anything, belief, in this case the gospel.
 - a. The word appears nineteen times in the first letter and eight times in the second, 244 times in the New Testament.
 - b. The word is used in both epistles in two ways, objectively trusting in the gospel or subjectively, describing personal exercise of trust in God.
 - c. The definite article is present “the faith”, faith in the person of Christ, not a particular Christian doctrine.
 - d. The phrase “the faith” refers to believing that Jesus was the Incarnate God, the Savior of the world, Whose death and

resurrection provided the needed atonement to be forgiven of one’s sins and justified before God.

- 2. The identity of these men is in fact an explanation of the reason for their being unreasonable and wicked.
 - a. Not all men have faith in the gospel.
 - 1) Men love darkness rather than light.
 - * And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil “poneros”. Jn. 3:19
 - 2) Men are spiritually dead.
 - * They are dead in their trespasses and sin, children of disobedience and children of wrath. Eph. 2:1-2
 - 3) Men knowing there is a God from creation, conscience and history are without excuse.
 - * “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and

Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.” Rom. 1:18-22

- b.** Those that do have faith in the gospel might have begun unreasonable and wicked, but were transformed by God’s grace and power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) They have come to the light.
 - 2) They have been made spiritually alive.
 - 3) They uphold the word in truth.

Illustration

Wally Tope, an evangelist and ex-Mormon who spoke against Mormonism was beat unconscious in the South Central Los Angeles riots, on April 30, 1992, and died 19 months later, on Nov. 24, 1993.

Application

- 1. The safekeeping of the gospel and messengers, who preach the gospel is by God alone.
 - a. No one preaching the gospel by the direction of God has died without God allowing it.
 - * Stephen was stoned to death, Jesus stood to receive the first church martyred. Acts 7
 - b. No one allowed to die by God is I the preaching of the gospel is not in lesser favor with God.

- * Peter and John were spared, James died, who really was delivered? Acts 11
- c. No one laying down his life for the gospel is foolish, but faithful!
 - * Paul said he had fought the good fight, he had finish the race and had keep the faith. 2Tim. 4:7
- 2. We once lived in an America that for the most part embraced the Christian faith, but no longer.
 - a. Prayer was removed from schools in 1962.
 - b. The humanistic and atheistic philosophies permeating our American society is scary.
 - c. The Universities of our nation are very hostile to the name of Jesus and the gospel, indoctrinating our young people to socialism, Marxism and Communism.
 - d. The indoctrination of tolerance, cultural-multiplicity, Political correctness and silencing us from our seocond amendment right by the cancel culture and Wokism has poisoned and corrupted our nation.
 - e. Americans during the 60’s responded in outrage knowing Russia, the old Soviet Union boasted in being an atheistic nation and persecuted and imprisoned Christians!
 - d. This was considered pure evil, but now the anti-Christian sentiment has permeated American society and is defended, under multi-cultural and political correctness and anti-capitalism.
 - 1) There is no criticism, censorship or offensive words against, Islam, paganism or

Hinduism, only against the Christian-Judeo faith!

2) “Righteousness exalts a **nation**, But sin *is* a reproach to *any* people.” Prov. 14:34

3. The gospel is offensive to man and without our dependency on God for protection and perseverance we would be killed.

* “Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul disguise and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.” Acts 14:19-20

4. Know the people who are antagonistic and enemies of the gospel lest you be naive or presumptuous.

* Paul says, “At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! 2Tim. 4:16-18

5. The opposition to the gospel will only grow worse with time, this is a needed reality in the mind of the believer.

* Paul says, “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have

learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*. 2Tim. 3:13-14

Paul requested prayer for protection from evil men!

Conclusion

This is Paul’s prayer request for the preaching of the gospel consisting of three things.

- I.** Paul requested prayer for the human instruments preaching the gospel!
- II.** Paul requested prayer for the word to be effective by the preaching of the gospel!
- III.** Paul requested prayer for protection from evil men wanting to stop the preaching of the gospel!