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## Praying To Our Triune God

2 Corinthians 13:14

Please take your Bible and open to 2 Corinthians 13:14. The last verse in 2 Corinthians 13 will be our focus tonight. Thanks for being here for our final class learning from the prayers of the apostle Paul. I just wanted all of you to know what a great encouragement you've been to me the last few weeks as we have studied some of Paul's prayers. There are more to study we won't get to, but I am thankful for the prayers we have been able to study. It's clear to me that you love the Lord and you love His Word and you want to do everything for the glory of God, including how you pray. That's the kind of group you want to teach.

As it relates to prayer, what do we know about God? **God is a good Father who wants us to bring the deepest concerns of our heart to Him.** In the midst of living in a wicked world that opposes God and His people, God tells us to humble ourselves under His mighty hand by casting all our anxieties on Him because He cares for us. He tells us to be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. He tells us to trust in Him at all times and to pour out our hearts before Him because He is a refuge for us. How amazing that through faith in Christ we can take whatever is on our hearts to God the Father and He hears and He cares.

One man looked at what the Bible teaches on prayer and summarized it with this saying, "The greatest tragedy of life is not unanswered prayers but unoffered prayers." Jesus told a parable in Luke 18:1 to motivate us to

keep praying and not lose heart. We are told in Colossians 4:2 to devote ourselves to prayer. We know how important prayer is to the Christian life and to the local church. The early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers.

We know how important private and public prayer is and yet because indwelling sin is still a reality, if we're not careful we can become selfish pray-ers. Selfish pray-ers are people whose prayers rarely get outside of their own life or their own home or their own zip code. I'm not saying we shouldn't pray for ourselves or for our family. I am saying that we should also pray for one another when we pray.

I'm convinced when joy is missing in my life one of the root causes is that I am thinking way too much about myself and my own family and not enough about our church family and how I can love people better who belong to Christ. A way to deal with despondency or discouragement or depression is by getting the focus off of yourself and onto the Lord and other people. I remember someone saying that depression starts with one thought that is not taken captive and made obedient to Christ. The more we think about ourselves the more discouraged we become, but when we die to ourselves through union with Christ and live to love God and serve others joy comes.

One of the prayers we considered in Philippians 1:9 was a prayer for our love to abound more and more. God is glorified when the agape love the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts through the gospel overflows in prayer for one another. **We love one another in the body of Christ so we pray for one another in the body of Christ.** The question we've attempted to answer in this class is, "How do we pray in a way that pleases God?"

This is where I think the prayers of Paul can help all of us. Alistair Begg says it better than I can, partly because he has a Scottish accent and anyone with a Scottish accent has an advantage as a preacher. Begg says this about the prayers of Paul, “Paul was a great pray-er. He was confident, he was committed, and he was humble and bold and compassionate. He clearly enjoyed prayer, and was excited about it. He expected his Father in heaven to hear what he said and to act in other peoples lives accordingly. He prayed and then was ‘watchful in it with thanksgiving’ (Colossians 4:2), ready to see how God would be pleased to answer his prayers.” I hope after this class you’re more excited to pray and you p[ray expecting to see God answer your prayers.

Tonight’s prayer is a prayer that the apostle Paul prayed for a church he dearly loved. If you read Paul’s letters, Romans to Philemon, it is clear that Paul loved every church he served. It reminds me of a question someone asked John MacArthur one night. He has 4 children and someone asked him if he had a favorite child. He answered by saying that his favorite child was the one he was with. Paul loved churches he was with and churches he wasn’t with. He loved everyone God saved through his preaching and he never stopped praying for them. All of his spiritual children were important to Paul and yet Paul seems to have a unique spot in his heart for the believers in Corinth.

2 Corinthians is really Paul’s defense of his apostleship because it was under attack. One of the attacks from the false teachers was Paul’s affection for the believers in the church. They questioned Paul’s loyalty. Paul’s defense was to a much higher court than a human court as it related to his love for these people. 2 Corinthians 10:10-11, “As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!” Whatever people

said about Paul didn't ultimately matter because Paul knew God knew he loved them.

Paul's love throughout 1-2 Corinthians shows up in correction. He corrects them in a lot of areas of belief and practice. As Paul gets ready to sign off in his last letter after lots of doctrinal and devotional corrections he ends with a benediction. This is where Paul got his hope for the future health of this church. What I want you to see in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is that Paul includes specific things about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in this prayer.

This is what we want to consider tonight - How do we approach God the right way when it comes to the role of the Father, the Son and the Spirit in the Christian life? Notice in this benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 Paul prays for Christ, God the Father and the Holy Spirit to do different things in the life of believers.

#### 2 Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

This prayer is unlike any of the prayers of Paul we've studied together in this class. **2 Corinthians 13:14 is a unique prayer for two reasons** - One reason is that it's only one verse. The other prayers we have considered are several verses long and tonight's prayer is one verse. That doesn't mean we will get out of class early. It's just a fact that 2 Corinthians 13:14 is one verse.

Another thing that makes this prayer unique is that it is a benediction. We know there are benedictions in the Bible but we may not be sure how they function in Scripture. **Some of you have possibly attended church services that ended with a formal benediction, but I never have.** I've never gone to a church that ended with a pastor standing up and announcing a formal benediction on the church before everyone heads to lunch.

That doesn't mean benedictions are bad. **Simply put a benediction is a blessing. H.B. Charles says, "A benediction is often announced simply by quoting the Scriptures."** Derek Thomas writes, "Benedictions are gospel words. They remind us at the end of the service that we receive the blessings of God's covenant *because Christ received its curses*. After every service of worship, we conclude with a reminder that, as Christians, we live under the shade of the Almighty, taking refuge beneath His wings because, wonder of wonders, we are free from the condemnation of sin."

I want to talk for a minute about how benedictions are used in the Bible and then I want to work through this benediction and consider how involving the Trinity can help us glorify God in our prayers.

A benediction that most of us are familiar with is found all the way back in Numbers 6. You can turn back with me in your Bible to Numbers 6. Numbers 6:22-27 is a blessing that the Lord tells Moses to tell Aaron to tell the people:

Numbers 6:22-27

**22** The Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

**23** "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

- 24** The Lord bless you and keep you;  
**25** the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
**26** the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.  
**27** “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

Whenever we read something like this what should we do? Read it in its context. Why did God tell Moses to tell Aaron to tell His people these things at this time in Israel’s history? Why did they need to know God’s attitude toward His people at this time? We know Numbers is between God delivering His people out of Egypt and their entrance into the promised land. This benediction follows lots of rules and regulations for God’s people, not as a way of earning favor with God, but experiencing it.

James Coakley, “The placement of this blessing here in the book stresses that a primary role of the priesthood was to bless the people. This blessing is at the end of a long legislative segment of the Pentateuch that began in Ex 20. This strategic position implies that if the people listen to and follow the instructions of the Lord, as they have so far in the book of Numbers, they could expect divine blessing and favor.”

**The benediction was a means of encouragement and a motivation for obedience.** Ronald Allen, “Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this prayer is that it is a provision for God’s desire to bless his people. Blessing is his idea, his purpose. It is not something his people must beg for, but it is the outreaching of his grace.” What I want you to consider is where the benediction is found. It comes after God reveals Himself to His people and tells them how to live.

Another example of this before we get into 2 Corinthians 13:14. Look at Jude for a minute. Jude is another example of a benediction coming after biblical instructions are given. Please turn to Jude 17. **Jude was written to encourage Christians to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.** Jude is writing to a body of believers that is under attack from false teachers. The church will always be coming under attack from false teachers. Jude is only one chapter and toward the end of the chapter Jude presents us with a call to persevere. There are several commands for us toward the end of this section:

#### Jude 17-23

- 17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 18 They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”
- 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.
- 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,
- 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.
- 22 And have mercy on those who doubt;
- 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Notice twice Jude writes - “But you.” But you is for those who know Christ. Here is what you need to remember. Here is what you need to do in order to protect yourself from error that will lead to destruction. He tells us what to do and then notice how Jude ends the letter in Jude 24-25 with a benediction:

Jude 24-25

- 24** Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,  
**25** to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Jude doesn't end the letter telling us what to do. **He ends with a blessing.** He ends with a benediction. He points them away from themselves and their situation upward and outward to God Almighty. Why did Jude end with a final benediction that is entirely focused on God? There aren't any commands in Jude 24-25.

**Jude knew that God's people needed God's power to do what God says.** Jude knew what they were up against. He knew how challenging their situation was from a human perspective. They needed to know God's power was working on their behalf. The Moody Bible Commentary reminds us that "Christ is able to take sinful people and make them fit for heaven, and keep them secure until they are in His presence. This is the assurance that brings **great joy.**" We fight the good fight from a position of security.

Benedictions are an important part of the Bible because they show us God's desire to bless His people. Also, I tell you this because they aren't magical formulas. **Benedictions don't somehow automatically catapult us into a new level of spiritual maturity.** We don't pronounce benedictions on one another and then poof, we all turn into more Christ-like people. **If announcing a benediction from the front of the church automatically catapulted people into greater Christlikeness I am sure I could talk Pastor Kirk into doing more of them starting this Sunday.**



**I'm not minimizing how important they are. I am maximizing where they are in the Bible.** Benedictions in the Bible come after God's revelation of salvation and after God's commands His people how to live as an encouragement that we are never alone to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. No. God is always working in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure. **God's promises and attitude toward us motivates us to keep doing what he says for His glory.**

Please turn back over to 2 Corinthians and let's go back and read the final section leading up to the benediction and then we will consider how Paul's use of a benediction can help our own prayer lives:

#### 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

- 11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.
- 13 All the saints greet you.
- 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

There are three commands in 2 Corinthians 13:11. Paul ends the letter with a series of commands. Five brief mostly one word imperatives. Why? These commands summarize some of the main problems he spent 2 letters addressing. **Paul wanted the church to be unified under the Lord Jesus Christ rejoicing in their common salvation, agreeing in the Lord and living in peace with one another.** Paul grounds his pastoral appeal for unity of spirit and for the rejection of discord in the theological doctrine of the Trinity.

Why? Murray Harris, "The grace of Christ banishes self-assertiveness and self-seeking, the love of God puts jealousy and anger to flight, while the fellowship created by the Spirit leaves no room for quarreling and factions."

Have you ever been in a situation in the church where you were very aware that you needed God's help to glorify God? I find myself there a lot. I was here last night during the last warriors event. It was a great night. There were lots of kids having a great time and lots of adults enjoying fellowship as they were trying to keep at least one eye on their children. My daughter Cooper got sick on Monday night so she couldn't be here. I came up here alone because I'm still trying to get to know people.

I was standing out in the foyer and there were kids running around everywhere. The music was turned up pretty loud above where I was standing. I was talking to a group of guys and I was out of my comfort zone. I have a hard time maintaining my focus as it is and I was trying to get to know the men a little better. I was out of comfort zone.

I knew I needed the Lord's help. Lord, help me hear. Help me care. Help me ask the right questions. Please help me not to say anything stupid. The older I get the more I see my need for the Lord's constant intervention in my life. That I really cannot do anything with the power of Christ working through me. I know that, but sometimes I feel it more than others.

Paul knew enough about the believers in Corinth to know that if they're going to apply these commands to their relationships in the body they're gonna need some divine intervention. Without God's help they'd be trying to sail the sailboat of their christian lives without the sail. I'm not even sure what a sail is and that makes sense to me. Thanks for thy patience!

This is where I think Paul's closing benediction can encourage all of us personally and when we pray. David Woodall, "Paul's prayer was that **all** true believers might continue to experience the **grace** that comes from **Christ**, the **love** that flows from **God**, and their **fellowship** with one another that is produced by the **Holy Spirit**."

To continue to obey God's good, pleasing and perfect will for our lives we need a continual experience of the work of the Triune God in these three areas:

1. The Grace That Comes From God the Son
2. The Love That Comes From God the Father
3. The Fellowship That Comes From God The Holy Spirit

Paul's order here is unique. Usually when we think of the Trinity we start with who? We start with God the Father. But you will notice in verse 14 Paul starts the benediction with God the Son, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." Why does Paul start this way? Murray Harris thinks it is because this order reflects Christian experience.

What message did Paul begin with when he got to Corinth? 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Paul knew that for sinners to experience salvation two things have to happen - The preaching of the gospel and the response of turning from sin and trusting in Christ alone. This is what happened in Corinth. Paul preached Christ crucified and people were convicted of their sin and converted to Christ.

A few weeks ago we looked at Paul's prayer in 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 where Paul thanks God for His work in the lives of these people. Paul starts with grace. 1 Corinthians 1:4, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus." 1-2 Corinthians is bookended with grace that is found in Christ Jesus. That's how Paul starts and ends these two letters. Why? Because grace is everything to the believer in Christ. It is the power we need to be saved and the power we need to keep living for Christ.

Do you remember how the Lord chose to keep the apostle Paul humble in his service for Christ? He gave Paul a gift. What kind of gift? Look back with me briefly to 2 Corinthians 12:7. 2 Corinthians 12:7-11 shows us how the Lord kept the apostle Paul humble in his service for Christ:

#### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

- 7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.
- 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.
- 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

The Lord kept Paul humble by leaving something painful in his life. The pain in his life kept Paul dependent on God's grace. God's grace toward us

in Christ is always sufficient and yet we don't always rely on His grace like we should. Sometimes the Lord has to get our attention. He knows exactly how to turn up the temperature in our lives to the setting that forces us to rely on the grace of Christ to obey God for His glory. God puts us in situations that show us how weak we are so we are then forced to look away from ourselves to Christ for the power we need to obey.

I don't know what all of you are going through tonight but I do know this - God's grace in Christ is sufficient to empower you to keep living for God's glory no matter how hard life gets. There is no situation in the church or in life that is beyond God's ability to enable you to endure faithfully. If God's grace in Christ was sufficient for Paul to endure insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities, His grace in Christ is sufficient for whatever we have to endure living here in Westfield.

Our danger is not so much insults or hardships or persecutions or calamities in our attempts to live for Christ though I would never want to minimize what you're going through tonight - Our problem is that because we rarely face such things we rarely feel our need to totally rely on Christ to get us through the day. We get to the place where we think we can kick off the training wheels and ride our own bikes in the Christian life. But we can't. We need God's Grace in Christ every moment of every day and we have it.

One of my favorite Christian books is by an author named Brian Edwards. It's a book produced by Day One Publications called Grace - Amazing Grace. In the book Edwards describes God's grace 16 different ways. 16 portraits of grace. It's a reminder that the grace of God in Christ is what saves us, but it doesn't stop working once we're saved. We need God's grace in Christ every day to keep living for God and we have God's grace

in Christ every day to keep living for God. God will never call you and I to go anywhere for Him and to obey Him without giving us the power in Christ to obey Him.

I don't know what challenge you currently have in life or in this church as it relates to what God is commanding you to do. I do know that Satan is a master deceiver and he wants to trick us into believing the lie that disobedience to God is better than obedience to God. He's good at that.

A pastor I admire named David Hegg puts it like this, "Satan, and the world system he has co-opted, do claim to have quite a bit to offer. His storehouse of 'pleasures' is filled and overflowing. He has masterfully duplicated almost all of the things God has graciously provided for our wellbeing. He has re-defined love as lust, success as accumulation, and wealth as monetary, while convincing us that selfishness is a right, humility a weakness, and integrity a poor business decision. He has manufactured all the opportunities we could ever want to have our own way, to go for the gusto and to love the one we're with – seemingly without consequence. Satan makes sin so easy, and so inviting. No wonder it is so hard to see through the façade. We make it even harder when we start looking, not through the lens of faith, but through the lens of our desire for immediate gratification."

How are we going to live in the world that is under the control of the evil one and not buy what Satan is selling? The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. His grace has brought us safe this far and His grace will lead us home. He's with us every step of the way to empower us to live for His glory. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ comes first in Paul's benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 because that was their experience. It is ordered in the

sequence of salvation first because it is the subjective testimony of our hearts.

Next is love:

## 2. The Love That Comes From God the Father

Next in the sequence of salvation is the love of God the Father. This is the unique love that God has for believers in Christ. In the order of salvation we

Paul is expressing his wish and prayer that the love God has already poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and demonstrated at the cross may continue to fortify his readers. He realized that only by fresh infusions of divine love would they be able to heed his appeals.

This is one thing we see in the obedience of Christ. We know that Jesus obeyed God the Father perfectly. Jesus says in John 8:29, “ And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” Jesus never sinned. Jesus knew why He came. He came to do the will of God the Father and to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus came to be the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus didn't come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

What reminder did our Savior receive prior to his public ministry and during his public ministry? God the Father kept reminding him of His love. Remember what happened when Jesus was baptized.

## Matthew 3:16-17

- 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;
- 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

God the Father speaks this way of His son right before the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and God the Father speaks this way later in Jesus' public ministry at the Mt. Of Transfiguration. Again a voice came out of the cloud, Mark 9:7, "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him." One thing we see that motivated Jesus to do the will of God the Father all the way through to the cross was a repeated understanding of God the Father's perfect love for Him. Jesus knew the Father loved Him.

The question is, "Do we?" There is an order to this benediction. It flows together. **The grace that is manifested to us in Christ is the result of the love of God the Father.** His love is the reason we are in Christ. We are studying the doctrine of salvation on Wednesday mornings in our men's group. It's been so encouraging for us to think through salvation together and to delight in it together. We read recently, "It is imperative for the student of Scripture to understand that the Son's mission to accomplish redemption is birthed out of this Trinitarian plan of salvation. The atonement wrought by the Son is inextricably **rooted in the Father's purpose to save those whom he has chosen.**" God the Father is the architect of our salvation. He planned it in eternity past and when the time was right He sent His Son to do the work of redemption.



John Murray, “God was pleased to set his invincible and everlasting love upon a countless multitude and it is the determinate purpose of this love that the atonement secures.”

If you doubt God the Father’s love you need to spend more time considering the plan of salvation and whose plan it was to save sinners. It wasn’t our plan. We would have never come up with this plan. Some of us forget where we park on Sunday mornings. How could people like us ever come up with a plan like this to save sinners? We couldn’t and the truth is we wouldn’t.

Again, “the love of God is not the result of Christ’s death but rather its cause, for it is because God so *loved* the world that he gave his only Son to be sacrificed on the cross.” The more we let these truths sink into our souls the more we will want to glorify God the Father by living in obedience to Christ. The more we marinate our minds in the love of God the Father the more we will desire to glorify Him through obedience.

### 3. The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

What is the glue that enables believers to stick together through thick and thin in the local church? Whose power makes unity in Christ possible? It’s not our power. It’s the power of God the Holy Spirit. Paul finishes his benediction with a prayer for their ongoing fellowship to be strengthened through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Lenski says, “The Holy Spirit stoops down to us and enfolds us in his communion in which are found all the grace and the love. Not from afar are these extended to us but in a union which is beyond our

comprehension....only a person can establish communion. The Holy Spirit is here named beside the two other persons.”

This is something we have learned through Paul’s prayers - The importance of the ongoing ministry of God the Holy Spirit in strengthening us on the inside to live for Christ. Ephesians helps us understand the church from a divine perspective and every chapter in Ephesians mentions the Holy Spirit. Paul includes the Holy Spirit in his prayer in Ephesians 1:17, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.” He circles back to include the Holy Spirit again in his prayer in Ephesians 3:16, “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

The longer I live the Christian life and the longer I pastor the more I see the need for the Holy Spirit to work in the church. Some of you have probably heard of a former pastor named Charles Simeon. He is worth getting to know. He pastored the same church in Cambridge, England for 49 years. As a new believer he would walk by the church and he would entertain thoughts about how awesome it would be to be able to be the main preacher in the church. Later his dream came true. He preached his first sermon at Trinity Church in Cambridge on November 10, 1792.

Something interesting happened when Simeon started preaching. The people didn’t want him. They wanted someone else to be the main preacher. The people controlled the pews in the church and they locked the pews on Sunday mornings so no one could sit in the pews. Simeon set up seats in the aisles and nooks and corners at his own expense. But the churchwardens took them out and threw them in the churchyard.

The church was close to a university and so as the students made their way to Trinity Church, they were prejudiced against the pastor by the hostile congregation, and for years he was slandered with all kinds of rumors. Basically his enemies said that he was a bad man with a front of piety.

When he tried to visit from house to house, hardly a door would open to him. This situation lasted at least ten years. The records show that in 1792 Simeon got a legal decision that the pewholders could not lock their pews and stay away indefinitely. But he didn't use it. He let his steady, relentless ministry of the word and prayer and community witness gradually overcome the resistance.

How did Simeon endure these trials without giving up or being driven out of his church? Simeon never married. A friend came to stay with him for a few months and wrote this about the way Charles Simeon started the day: "Simeon invariably arose every morning, though it was the winter season, at four o'clock; and, after lighting his fire, he devoted the first four hours of the day to private prayer and the devotional study of the Scriptures . . . . Here was the secret of his great grace and spiritual strength. Deriving instruction from such a source, and seeking it with such diligence, he was comforted in all his trials and prepared for every duty."

Simeon focused on the Word and prayer. He knew what God had given him to do and he knew that God was the only One who could use the gospel to change people's hearts. He chose to meditate on the goodness of God and he trusted God to bring change to the church in His own perfect timing. In another place Simeon says, "By constantly meditating on the goodness of God and on our great deliverance from that punishment which

our sins have deserved, we are brought to feel our vileness and utter unworthiness; and while we continue in this spirit of self-degradation, everything else will go on easily. We shall find ourselves advancing in our course; we shall feel the presence of God; we shall experience His love; we shall live in the enjoyment of His favour and in the hope of His glory.”

I close this class with this story because I want you to leave with hope. Thankfully, the Lord has brought unity to Cornerstone Bible Church. No one is locking our pews. And yet our unity in Christ will not be something that is maintained apart from the continuing ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Simeon’s note on 2 Corinthians 13:14 caught my attention, “And who can declare what “the communion of the Holy Ghost” is, when the taste of it creates a very heaven upon earth? Would to God, that the words so often, and so carelessly repeated by us, were more deeply considered, and more richly experienced!”

What can we learn from this? It is normal to pray to God the Father through faith in God through the power of God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). It is also okay to praise Christ directly for His work and pray for His work in other people’s lives and it is okay to praise the Holy Spirit and pray for His work in other people’s lives - According to what the Bible teaches about their role in salvation and in the Christian life.

Prayer that pleases God includes addressing the Trinity because that’s who God is. We glorify God in prayer when we not only include the Trinity but we know how God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit work in our lives. We trust in them to do what the Bible tells us they do in our lives.

My hope for all of us is that we devote ourselves to prayer. We can never pray too much. And when we pray I trust that our prayers will not only

include the unburdening of our hearts to God but also include praying for one another and we will let these prayers of Paul guide our prayers for one another and we will be excited to see how the Lord answers these prayers. Let's pray.