

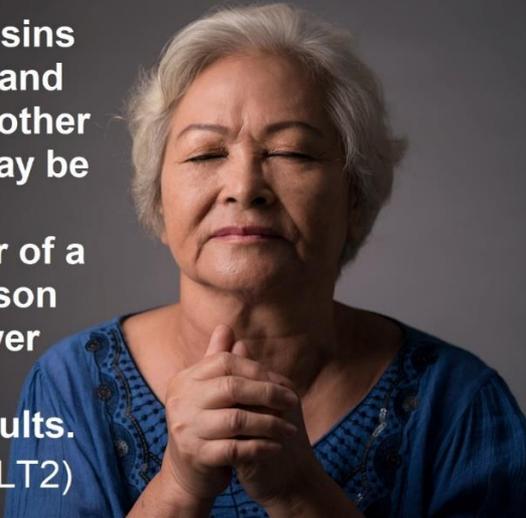
Sermon Notes 12/26/21

“Intercessory Prayer”

How should we pray for one another?

1. Pray for us to _____ God’s word.
2 Thessalonians 3:1
Colossians 4:3-4
2. Pray for our _____ from evil.
2 Thessalonians 3:2-3
Matthew 6:9-13
3. Pray for our _____ to God’s word.
2 Thessalonians 3:4
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
4. Pray for our love and _____.
2 Thessalonians 3:5
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

**Confess your sins
to each other and
pray for each other
so that you may be
healed. The
earnest prayer of a
righteous person
has great power
and produces
wonderful results.
James 5:16 (NLT2)**



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 10: December 26 – January 2

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians confronts three problems that he addressed in his first letter: persecution, confusion about the end times, and Christians refusing to work. In chapter 1, Paul thanks God for the faith and perseverance the Thessalonians were showing in a time of severe persecution. In chapter 2, he reveals some more details about the end times and how to be prepared for the return of Christ. And in chapter 3, he rebukes those who were idle and tells his readers to practice a good work ethic. However, before he addresses this third issue, Paul asks his readers to pray for him. In the first five verses of chapter 3, we see the power of intercessory prayer.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

1. Who did Paul ask the Thessalonians to pray for in verse 1?

Even though Paul was an Apostle and the one who converted many of the Thessalonians to Christ, he still knew that their prayers for him would make a difference in his ministry. On several occasions Paul asked his readers to pray for him (1 Thess. 5:25; Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3-4). Regardless of how spiritually mature we are or how long we have known the Lord, we will always be blessed when Christians pray for us.

F.F. Bruce observes,

While praying constantly for their converts, Paul and his colleagues felt the need of prayer for themselves and encouraged their converts to make the fellowship of prayer a reciprocal exercise. By praying for the missionaries, the converts were participating in the spread of the gospel.¹

2. What did Paul say about the way the Thessalonians responded to the Gospel? (3:1)

¹ F. F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 198.

3. What did Paul want the message of the Lord to do? (3:1)

The phrase “spread rapidly” is translating the Greek word *trecho* (τρέχω), which literally means to run. Leon Morris notes,

Paul sees ‘the word’ as active and vigorous, moving swiftly to accomplish God’s purpose. The imagery goes back to Psalm 147:15, and the Greek games may also be in mind, for Paul often uses illustrations from these athletic contests. ‘May run’ refers to what the word does in itself, while *be honored* (or ‘glorified’) is concerned rather with its effect on people.²

4. What was Paul’s prayer request in verse 2?

5. What type of people were threatening Paul? (3:2)

6. How did Paul describe the Lord in verse 3?

Jon Weatherly notes how the faithfulness of God has been a common theme in 2 Thessalonians. He writes,

This section is loosely composed, focusing largely on the faithfulness of God and the readers’ response to it. The theme of God’s faithfulness has in fact been the focus of much of ch. 1-2, since confidence in the face of prevailing opposition and in the time of judgment depends on confidence in God’s faithfulness. So here that aspect of the earlier discussion becomes a particular subject of direct exhortation. Because God is faithful, the readers should pray for Paul (vv. 1-2), and continue in their Christian lifestyle (v. 4), looking to the Lord to enable their perseverance (v. 5).³

7. What does the Lord do for His people in verse 3?

8. What confidence did Paul have in the Christians at Thessalonica? (3:4)

9. How did Paul pray for his readers in verse 5?

² Leon Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 138.

³ Jon A. Weatherly, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 281-282.

Weatherly observes,

The request for prayer and statements of God's faithfulness and of confidence the readers' faithful response leads Paul again to express his own wish-prayer (2:16-17; 1 Thess 3:11-13), reflecting his reliance on the faithful God to supply the resources for the Thessalonians faithful practice of the gospel... Again the prayer is that deliverance should take the form not of an absence of difficulty but of the resources to endure the difficulty for the Lord's glory.⁴

10. What did Paul want his readers to remember about the Lord? (3:5)

11. When Paul talks about God's love in verse 5, do you think he is talking about the love God has for us, the love God enables us to have for others, or both?

12. When Paul talks about Christ's perseverance in verse 5, do you think he is talking about the perseverance Christ had on the cross, the perseverance Christ enables us to have in difficult times, or both?

13. How does prayer change people or circumstances?

14. How could prayer help spread the message of the Lord?

15. How does prayer protect us?

16. How does our belief about God affect the way we pray?

17. How can meditating on God's love change us?

18. How can thinking about Christ's perseverance strengthen our own stand?

19. How can you pray for the effectiveness of God's word this week?

20. For whom will you pray this week that they may be strengthened and protected?

⁴ Weatherly, 286-287.