

Faith CHURCH

The Tapestry
Faith Church

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A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY OF GRACE

IN THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Ponderings

By John Armstrong Jr.

One of life's little pleasures is having a frozen maracuyá drink. Cyndy and I were able to share one in the Cali airport as we were waiting to come home from Colombia. They said our flight was delayed out of Cali, so it looked like we would miss our connection in Bogota and not make it home. That was at about 12:30 pm and it was snowing here in Frederick. It was about 85 degrees in Cali. We were already four days late coming home because of the 737 grounding, and it looked like we were going to be delayed again.

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"O taste
and see
that the
LORD is
good."

PSALM 34:8



Maracuyá is one of my favorite things and as I sat there enjoying the marvelous flavor of that passion fruit drink, I thought about the goodness of God even in the little delays and troubles in life. We wouldn't have gotten the drink if we had not been delayed and then the delay kind of just disappeared and they started people boarding the plane. We were a little late, but it didn't threaten our connection. That connection happened to be delayed as well as was the flight out of Atlanta. All told however, we were only an hour and half behind our original schedule. We got home at 4:00 AM instead of 2:30 AM, driving in the falling snow. God is good to his people in every circumstance.

Have you ever tasted passion fruit? Why is it so good? Why is the crunch and sweetness of an apple such a great thing? Why is roasted meat so tasty? The answers are simple. These things are so because God has ordained it to be so. These things are for our enjoyment, plain and simple.

Life in a fallen world is hard and yet, there are many things we consider pleasures. Just think what pleasures the New Heaven and New Earth will hold. If passion fruit is wonderful here, I can't wait to get to heaven. While we are here, we struggle with thorns and thistles and aircraft groundings and any number of minor inconveniences not to mention the major things like cancer and catastrophes of all kinds. Am I just rambling at this point? No, I'm quite focused in what I want to say. God is holy, righteous, and good, all the time. We live in a fallen world and that brings with it all kinds of pains, trials, and troubles. Yet in the midst of all that, God is at work to make those who trust in Him more like His Son Jesus. We are being sanctified.

The processes of growth and change are often painful, yet in the midst of those things there is passion fruit and there is companionship and there is a Sovereign God working out all His holy will. Life's little pleasures in the midst of life's trials and troubles are a reminder that God loves us and has created us for good and not evil. As we taste those pleasures, we are reminded that this world is not our home. In Christ, we are citizens of a better kingdom. The simple pleasures we enjoy here are pointing us to that fact. Enjoy the pleasures and as you enjoy them thank God who gives them and pray for that day when we will be home with the Lord.



Intern's Inklings

By Zach Fiol

The Seven Churches of Revelation, Part II: The Message to the Church in Smyrna in Revelation 2:8-11

Although we do not see much physical persecution here in America, there is much persecution abroad in many countries. We can all think of the Middle East, parts of India, or China as countries where the church endures a lot of persecution. The church in Biblical Smyrna also endured a ton of persecution.

Meanwhile, persecution in America affects us in different ways. It is less physical and more spiritual. The most dominant form of persecution is being lulled to sleep and being lazy in our faith. This is the greatest way that our faith is tested in our cultural context.

Just like there was a battle for souls in the church in Smyrna (which is in modern day Turkey), there is a battle for our souls here at Faith Church as well. We have the same enemies, the world and the devil, although the attacks are manifested differently than they were in Smyrna. In many ways, the battle here is over our hearts and minds and not primarily our physical bodies.

I am assuming that most of us do not fear prison or physical death from our enemies. Nevertheless, we still encounter spiritual attacks from the devil, and we may not even notice them. It can be something as simple as laziness in not reading our Bibles or not engaging in prayer enough. It can also be the besetting sins of the flesh that weigh us down in the process of Christlikeness. In our self-absorbed culture it is so easy to be distracted and nonchalant about our faith, in addition, to the numerous temptations that deprive us of rest in our Lord and Savior.

How do we make sense of this passage? We get a hint at the beginning of this passage in verse 8 and at the end of verse 10. Verse 8, "The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life." These words give us hope from Jesus who gives us rest for our weary souls.

Amid our tribulation, we can have eternal rest for our souls. We have eternal life because of the death and resurrection of Christ. This is really the message of all of Revelation. Revelation was written to give weary saints hope to resist the devil, the world, and their own flesh. If we are in Christ, we have the promise of eternity with our Lord and Savior. That is our hope. That is our joy.

But how do we live in the here and now? John, in verse 10, gives us two exhortations: "Do not fear" and "Be faithful" in the face of all of our tribulations and struggles. Life on this earth is not easy and if we say it is, then we are fooling ourselves or worse, making this world our home. John encourages us to not fear the persecution and tribulation on this earth.

We are then called to be faithful unto death. Christ on the cross endured more suffering than we could ever imagine. He endured the very wrath of God for us. We must proclaim the hope of the Gospel and live out the implications by not fearing the tribulations that will come our way.

The Faith Family Page

Encourage one another,
 be of one mind, live in peace.
 And the God of love and
 peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11

HAPPENINGS

WEEKLY

Sundays:

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:15am Fellowship
- 10:45am Worship
- 5:00pm Evening Worship
- 6:00pm Youth Group

Mondays:

- 7:00pm Adult Choir

Wednesdays:

- 12:00 Men's Lunch Bunch
- 7:00pm Prayer meeting

Thursdays:

- 6:30pm Praise Team

Fridays:

- 10:30am Fiber Friends

MONTHLY

Third Saturdays, (Feb 17th)

- 8:30am Men's Breakfast
- 8:45am Women's Bible Study

Third Sundays, (Feb 18th)

- 12:00pm Fellowship Meal



- 1 Jean Debnam
- 3 Matt Nardi
- 3 Anna Yost
- 8 Charlotte Van Meter
- 9 Becky Buchanan
- 13 Richard Boveroux
- 14 Noelle Snyder
- 18 Debbie Tuel
- 19 Kyrie Johnston
- 19 Collin Kenny
- 19 Holly Nardi
- 20 Cyndy Armstrong
- 20 Evelyn Paugh
- 21 Crystal Wolford
- 24 Elijah Lockridge
- 24 Joel Lockridge
- 24 Zach Fiol
- 26 Martin Hudzinski
- 28 David Ehrenmann



Lord Jesus,

As we stamp our feet and blow on our fingers to keep our bodies warm, may we remember the warmest act of kindness ever made toward men. May we fix our eyes on You, Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Who with the joy of saving us for all eternity set before You, endured the agony of the cross.

How can we be cold with such fervent love? Touch every weak spot in our hearts and give us the gift of knowing our sin! Fill us with Your spiritual warmth to the utmost so that it spills over into humility and gratitude and deep desire to live for You. Give us all the strength and confidence we need to defy the chill of our culture and trying circumstances, and magnify the radiant warmth of Your love!
 Amen.

Heart Deep Prayers

Why We Prioritize Spiritual Needs

Article by Scott Hubbard, Editor, desiringGod.org

Imagine that the angel Gabriel has been recording your prayers for the last year. Every request for yourself or others has found its way into his heavenly ledger. What might such a record reveal?

How many petitions would fall under the heading of physical health? How long would be the column tracking requests about your relationships? How many tallies would you find next to “Work” or “School” or “Church”? How many vague prayers for “blessing” might you find?

I’ve been asking myself such questions lately, in part because of a striking observation from Tim Keller’s book [Prayer](#). If you study the prayers of the apostle Paul recorded throughout his letters, Keller says, you may notice something striking: among the many requests Paul makes on behalf of the churches, he never once asks God to heal their bodies, fill their wombs, prosper their vocations, or lift their persecutions. In fact, Keller writes, “Paul’s prayers for his friends contain no appeals for changes in their circumstances” (20). I fear that if I set my own prayer record next to Paul’s, some of my first prayers may appear last, and my last prayers first.

Heart-Deep Prayers

Now, we should beware of stating the case too strongly. Even though Paul’s prayers for others contain no appeals for circumstantial changes, the apostle clearly had a category for such prayers. He invites the Philippians to “let [their] requests be made known to God,” without limiting the requests to a certain kind ([Philippians 4:6](#)). He calls Timothy to pray “for kings and all who are in high positions” ([1 Timothy 2:1–2](#)). When asking for prayer himself, Paul sometimes mentions personal safety and success in travel ([Romans 15:31–32](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:1–2](#)). He also pleaded three times for God to take his thorn. ([2 Corinthians 12:8](#)).

Yet such requests form the background, not the foreground, of Paul’s recorded prayers; they are q’s and z’s in the alphabet of his intercessions, present but not frequent. Instead, Paul displays a relentless focus on the inward life, the Christian soul, the hidden realm of the heart — or, to use a phrase from [Ephesians 3:16](#), the “inner being.”

So, for example, Paul prays that the Romans might “abound in hope” and know the presence of “the God of peace” ([Romans 15:13, 33](#)). He wants the Ephesians to have “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him”; he wants Christ to “dwell in [their] hearts through faith” ([Ephesians 1:17; 3:17](#)). Paul yearns for the Philippians to abound in discerning love ([Philippians 1:9](#)) and for the Colossians to give thanks like heaven-bound saints ([Colossians 3:12](#)). He asks that the Thessalonians might be holy through and through ([1 Thessalonians 5:23](#)). Even when Paul prays for outward matters like public obedience or visible unity, these always flow from somewhere deeper, somewhere inner. Paul’s prayers cut to the heart.

Why He Prayed What He Prayed

God gave us Paul’s prayers, in part, so that by rehearsing them our own requests might grow in biblical balance and substance. Like the Psalms, Paul’s prayers train our tongues in the language of heaven. They give us words before the throne of grace.

At the same time, growing in Pauline prayer means more than simply repeating his requests. As D.A. Carson notes, Paul’s prayers spring from a robust “biblical vision,” a vision that “embraces who God is, what he has done, who we are, where we are going, what we must value and cherish” ([Praying](#)).

with Paul, 43). If we abstract Paul's prayers from the biblical vision that inspired them, they may feel unnatural (like a second language we can't quite learn). But once we catch his vision, we find ourselves slowly becoming fluent in Paul's heart-deep prayers.

What, then, was Paul's vision? Among the several areas we could explore, consider how Paul's prayers were shaped by past grace and future glory.

Prayer Furthers Faith and Love

The first part of Paul's vision comes from the past. "He remembers the grace we have received in the past, and thinks through the direction of our lives," Carson writes (42). In other words, Paul considers the "good work" God has already begun in the lives of his people, and in prayer, he aims to partner with God in "[bringing] it to completion" ([Philippians 1:6](#)). He sees the seeds of grace, and prays them into flowers.

And what is the good work God has begun? What grace does he intend to grow? Again and again, Paul thanks God for two signs of grace among the saved: faith and love. "Because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you" ([Ephesians 1:15-16](#)). To Paul, faith in Jesus and love for God's people were more precious than all the world's silver and gold. Our body may be broken, our dreams undone, our relationships fraught — but if we have faith and love, God has lavished us with grace ([Ephesians 1:7-8](#)).

Paul's prayers run like rivers from this fountain of past grace, flowing with faith and love. If God has begun the good work of faith, then Paul will pray (in a dozen creative ways) for faith to grow, for God to give "the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" ([Ephesians 1:17](#)). And if God has begun the good work of love, then Paul will ask (again with wonderful creativity) for love to "abound more and more" ([Philippians 1:9](#)).

Paul's prayers remind us of an easily forgotten truth: in this age, the character of our inner being is far more important than the circumstances of our outer being. As Paul writes elsewhere,

We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#))

One day, God will raise and glorify our "outer self" and banish every bad circumstance. But in the meantime, his good work happens mostly in the "inner self." He aims to deepen our faith, love, and every other grace until we see him face to face. So, while Paul sometimes prays for the outer self's welfare, he fastens his attention on the inner self's renewal.

When Earthly Requests End

If Paul's prayers keep one eye on the past, they keep another eye on the future — and not just the future vaguely, but one future moment in particular. Repeatedly, Paul returns to one future day, when God's good work will finally come to an end: "the day of Jesus Christ" ([Philippians 1:6](#)).

Five times in Paul's recorded prayers, he explicitly mentions the day of Christ's return ([Philippians 1:10](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:13](#); [5:23](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:9-12](#); [2 Timothy 1:18](#)). He prayed, it seems, in the shadow of the second coming, with the returning Christ standing at the door of his prayer closet. And the power of that future promise governed what he asked of God.

When Jesus appears, the mists will rise, the fog will clear, and the true priorities of this age will stand forth in startling clarity. Our circumstances in this life, which are by no means insignificant, will bow before matters far weightier still. Healthy or sick, did we glorify God with our bodies? Arms empty or full, did we abound in thanksgiving to him? At peace or in conflict, did we display the patience of Christ? In success or failure, were we "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" ([Philippians 1:11](#))?

What if we prayed, for ourselves and our friends, under a sky ready to split before the glory of Christ? We might ask more often, and with greater fervor, that God would establish our hearts "blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" ([1 Thessalonians 3:13](#)). We might pray less for circumstances to change, and more for a heart that loves Christ in all circumstances.

(continued on the bottom of the next page)

Updated Website and New App!

Our website

has been freshened up and has a brand new look! We've added another giving option, (or you can continue using what you currently have) as well as more live stream functions.

The app

has lots of info, such as our weekly bulletin, announcements, upcoming events, the current Tapestry, a place to give tithes and offerings online, and an option to send text messages to members of our church. We are spinning up to even more capabilities like Sunday School and nursery check-in, Sunday morning volunteer management, hosting the live stream, a church directory, information and sign ups for small groups and events, and access to past sermons. We hope to have these in place over the next 6 months.

**See the easy instructions on Slack and in the Narthex.
Download the app and start using it today!**

Our Hearts His Home

When we kneel with Paul between past and future, grace and glory, Christ's cross and Christ's second coming, we find ourselves saying new words, praying fresh prayers. At the bottom of our prayers, we ask for faith and love, inward strength and heart-level holiness. Or, Paul writes in Ephesians, we plead for Christ to make our hearts his home.

According to the riches of his glory [may he] grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. ([Ephesians 3:16-17](#)) Paul asks that Christ would take up his residence within, filling every hallway and room with his brilliance. He asks that we would have what Keller calls a "powerful sense of God's reality" — a sense that transcends our present situation and even survives the grave.

"Without this powerful sense of God's reality," Keller writes, "good circumstances can lead to overconfidence and spiritual indifference. Who needs God, our hearts would conclude, when matters seem to be so in hand?" (Prayer, 21). But when Christ makes his home in our hearts, then we can make our home in every circumstance: in "plenty and hunger," in "abundance and need" ([Philippians 4:12](#)).

So then, pray for healing, but pray also (and most) for holiness. Pray for relational peace, but pray also (and first) for relational patience. Pray for dreams still distant and hopes still deferred, but pray also (and chiefly) for Jesus to walk with you even among the ruins of the life you wish you had. Then, whether outward circumstances flourish or wither, all will be well within. For Christ will still dwell within. 🙏

Tapestry

For Kids!



Though your sins are like

They shall be

Isaiah 1:18

Ice skating probably started in northern Europe as early as 1000 BC. The first skates were made from the bones of elk, oxen, reindeer, and other animals. Skating became especially popular in the Netherlands, which has many artificial waterways called canals. In the winter, skaters used the canals to get from place to place.

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/ice-skating/437405>

Find the Hidden Pictures!



www.hiddenpicturepuzzles.com



"for the **LORD** your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

