A Praying & Pleading Church Selected Scriptures from the Prayer Life of Paul Fellowship Dallas – Sun 10th Sept 2023

Intro:

iii.

- i. E.g. Mike Williams he didn't play at prayer; he pled in prayer
- ii. **Do you play at prayer or plead in prayer?**

Ten Boom – 'prayer was designed to be our driving wheel, but for many Christians it has become our spare wheel' 3 reasons why we need to plead in prayer:

- a. We are in a spiritual battle:
 - i. 'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.' Eph 6:12
 - ii. PUT ON THE FULL ARMOUR OF GOD [Eph 6:13-17] / "PRAY IN THE SPIRIT" [Eph 6:18]
 - iii. 'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.' Eph 6:18
 - iv. E.g. Raymond Davis App with Airlines Overhead the enemy hates us wants to divide, distract, destroy
 - v. There's a spiritual battle over our children, young people, marriages, worship, word, unity, city, country
 - vi. We need to plead with God on our knees for His power, protection & Him to push back forces of evil
- b. Jesus said 'Apart from Me you can do nothing' [John 15]
 - i. E.g. John Reed we had just graduated DTS, ready to change world, He emphasized NOTHING!!
 - ii. I don't know if we truly believe this in the western church when we want to do something we program, plan, put people in place, promote online, call committees to fix problems all the while we do not pray
 - iii. And it hit me this summer we can talk about the first church being [until the cows come home! ©]:
 - Christ-centered
- Spirit-filled
- Worship, Word & Fellowship Driven

- Prayer Saturated
- Grace Abundant
- Missional No Matter What
- But unless we pray we will not experience his power & these things will <u>never</u> become a reality
- c. When God's people truly plead in prayer [for his will, in full dependence on Him] God loves to move in power
 - i. 'if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land' [2 Chronicles 7:14]
 - ii. Don't you long to see this in our church, our city & our country? God to move in power.
- iv. Today we are going to see how one man, the apostle Paul prayed and pled for the first / early Church:
 - i. Actually, over the next 5 weeks we are going to consider 5 of his prayers for the first / early Church
 - 1. Still in this Series 'The Church That Changed the World'
 - 2. Part 2 = Prayers & Pleadings for the First Church
 - ii. And call one another back to the place of prayer pleading over Fellowship
 - iii. That we would once again become the people God He wants us to become
 - iv. Having laid the foundations ... our first move would be to pray & plead
 - v. Today I simply [through a simple snap shot of the prayer life of Paul] want you to see Paul did this he prayed & pled with God in prayer for the 1st / early Church
- v. Turn with me to 3 selected passages in the prayer life of Paul Romans 1:8-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2 Timothy 1:3
- I. Paul Prayed & Pled with God in Prayer for the First / Early Church [IN ROME]

Romans 1:8-11:

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. ⁹ God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰ in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong – ¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

- (a) Corinth / AD 57, 3 years after young 16 year old Nero elected to throne, not in depths of persecution yet, surrounded by immorality, & being on the verge of persecution
- (b) Can't say he knows them personally but still is Committed to pray for them
 - He actually hasn't met these believers yet: Sometimes we only pray for people we know deeply / He prays like they are fam
 - MTR = E.g. Jim Cymbala pray for them like they are you kids. Will you pray for your family like you love them?
 - "Often we truly persist in prayer for the things we love the most, value the most, or are broken-hearted about the most."
 - "Prayer is one of the most definite and genuine proofs of sincere Christian affection" WH GRIFFITH THOMAS
- (c) Chooses to give thanks for them for their faith

- MTR = Often we grumble about 1 another, Paul in the NT if he has problem with another he goes 1-2-1, & prays for them

(d) Considers it an act of worship & service to God to pray on their behalf

- Relative clause here which shows praying flows out of praise / A relative clause provides more information
- "The relative clause is by no means a mere embellishment, but is of real significance in connexion with Paul's oath; for it points to the fact that his praying for them is an integral part of his service of God"
- MTR = For those of you who feel you don't have energy of 20's, activism of 30's, can't serve like 4-=50's [my daughter said to me − oh your so from the 1900's ③]- this is your act of service and worship
- (e) Constantly remembers them in his prayers "how constantly I remember you in my prayers" (9b-10a)
 - Gr. = 'constantly, unceasingly' continuously, at all times / consistently throughout my days

(f) Continuously throughout his days - "at all times" (10b)

- At all times constantly, consistently through my days / but other side in original at the times of my prayers I remember you
- An ongoing conversation throughout the day, but at all the times he prays (Jews = 3 times a day)
- The NIV "in my prayers" translates $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\dot{\imath}$ τῶν προσευχῶν μου. The phrase means "at [the time of] my prayers" and suggests that in keeping with his Jewish upbringing Paul maintained specific times for prayer (Jewish custom called for three periods each day; cf. Dan 6:11; Acts 10:3; Did 8.2)
- We need both, a consistent conversation of prayer through our days, but intentional specific times throughout our weeks
- (g) Certainly in line with God's will aligning his heart and prayers to the will of God
 - "The will, or good pleasure, of God was the determining factor in all of Paul's plans. As the servant of God, he worked within the framework of the divine will. All too often believers formulate their own plans and then attempt to co-opt God into them."

(h) Core desire is that they may be strong -

- To cause to be inwardly firm or committed, confirm, establish, strengthen
 - Luke 22:32 same word used when Jesus says to Peter "I've prayed for you, that you will not fail ... strengthen"
 - Acts 18:23 Paul went through Galatia & Phrygia strengthening the disciples"
 - Rom 16:25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to the gospel
- MTR Do you know how many believers need strength? In marriage, obedience, perseverance, standing strong?

II. Paul Prayed & Pled with God in Prayer for the First / Early Church [THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD]

2 Thess 1:11: ¹¹ We constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.

2 Tim 1:3: I thank God, whom I serve ... with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers

2 Cor 11:27-28: I've often gone without sleep; ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

You know when you do a study of Paul's prayers:

Worship – he often breaks out into worship

<u>Formation</u> – the majority of his prayers for discipleship [Gary & Garrett] Mission – he asks for & calls believers to stand on mission with him

E.g. Jesus told a Story of a Persistent Widow

III. Don't Play at Prayer, Plead in Prayer [HP]

Flooding our Sunday Worship Services with Pleading Prayer:

E.g. Spurgeon's Church – Pre-Service Prayer

Flooding our Working Weeks with Pleading Prayer:

E.g. Emmanuel – 24/7 prayer room – in foyer – every single hour covered

Flooding Specific Places in our Church & Community with Pleading Prayer:

E.g. Lorna, praying over seats – I know there is a wonderful prayer team who does that here on occasion

E.g. Pam – Walking the parking lot before our evangelistic event

THE CHURCH THAT CHANGED THE WORLD



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- (III) GOD'S PEOPLE TRULY PLEAD IN PRAYER, GOD OFTEN MOVES IN POWER

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. 11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong ...

ROMANS 1:8-11:

11 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:11-12

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

2 TIMOTHY 1:3

(1) PAUL PRAYED & PLED WITH GOD IN PRAYER FOR THE FIRST / EARLY CHURCH [IN ROME]

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WHEN YOU DO A STUDY OF PAUL'S PRAYERS FOR THE FIRST / EARLY CHURCH:

- (a) Worship he often breaks out into worship
- (b) Formation the majority of his prayers are for discipleship
- (c) he asks for strength & calls believers to stand on mission with him

(3) PLEAD WITH GOD IN PRAYER