

PRAY for THESE things also

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Abstract: If you're in a "prayer slump" lately, this sermon can be a solid "pick-me-up" for you. Here we focus on scriptures that tell us clearly what to pray about. Then we take it up a notch and examine the depth of Paul's prayers and see what we can learn from his model.

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How's your praying been lately? Be honest with yourself. Do you pray first thing every single day? Is God placed *first* in your life – or do you put other things before your God?

I know as a father myself, I love it when my daughters, who are thousands of miles away from us, calls us, or can I use a Biblical term, "calls on us", just as praying is described as "calling upon the Lord". **God loves hearing from you** as well, since you are His daughter or His son! ***How long has it been since you've given our heavenly Father that pleasure?*** I hope, not long.

God makes it clear that we are carved, or inscribed, on to the palms of His hands – so He *won't* forget us or leave us (**Isaiah 49:16**). But God also makes it clear that He wants to know we haven't forgotten *Him* either. We're front and center before His awareness when we call on Him – just as I drop everything I'm doing and take a few minutes to gab with my daughters when *they* call. I'm focused on them, I'm laughing with them or *feeling* with them as they describe what's going on.

Do you remember the high priest of the Old Covenant times? He wore a breastplate over *his heart* that held the 12-stoned multicolored Urim and Thummin. Notice what God says was one reason the High Priest wore it – and I think it bears correlating with praying:

Exodus 28:29-30

"So Aaron **shall bear the names of the sons of Israel** on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a **memorial** before the LORD continually. [TEV: "so that I, the LORD, will always remember my people"] 30 And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, **and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD**. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel **over his heart before the LORD continually.**"

I find that verse fascinating! I think when we call on God, He knows we're not just praying to *get* something from God, but we're praying to *give* Him something very precious: *our hearts*. To a true believer, our dear Abba is first in our lives, first on our minds, first in our worship, and first for our reason for being. Our lives are not about *us*, when we pray, but about *Him* and worshipping Him. And we in turn are on *His* heart – represented by Aaron the High Priest wearing the 12-stone Urim and Thummin over his heart, that we just read in Ex. 28:30. The 12 stones represented Israel, and today *we, the church, are the Israel of God* (**Galatians 6:16**). Today, Jesus is our High Priest, and *we* are on His heart right now, I promise you.

God considers **the prayers of His people** a "sweet aroma", like a pleasant perfume (**Psalms 141:2; Rev. 8:3-4**). If you could have gone into the Holy of Holies of Solomon's temple, in front of the veil was a bronze altar on which was burned incense. This sweet aroma, this perfume, *filled* the Holy

Place and would also waft into the Holy of Holies. That altar of incense pictures our words when you bend your knees before God and pray.

Is communing with God your first priority – or relegated to when things slow down a bit?
Are we at times more involved and focused on our business, our jobs, on making a living – than on He who lives and gives us life?

Remember, we are the House of God today, and God's House should be called "a House of Prayer". If everything in our lives seems like a tornado just hit, perhaps the Lord of the House of God (Jesus) is doing in *your* house of prayer, in *your* life, what He did at the temple in Jerusalem! Perhaps He's trying to get our attention. Perhaps He's clearing out all the distractions, and overturning the money changers' tables going on in our lives. Stop and think.

Greetings, children of God. This is your brother Philip Shields. You've heard many sermons on prayer, but it's so easy to let down in this vital resource we have. So I hope you'll give attention to this topic. Prayer is vital in our growth, and in these last days, just when we should be *more* fervent in prayer as never before, I suspect many of us are letting it lag. I hope even you children and teenagers will listen today, because God loves hearing from you as well. And you need to pray every day as well, and get into the habit of it. When you remember that Jesus does not speak in a complimentary way about the end time church – like "will there be faith?" – we should be focusing periodically on prayer to help remedy that.

Today I want to focus on topics God Himself tells us to be praying about. There are actual scriptures that say – "pray for this" or "pray for that", and we'll look at *that* list of scriptures today. We know the Lord's Prayer gives us ideas of what to pray about, so we'll touch on the Lord's Model Prayer too, but I want to also focus on other topics we're told to pray about. **I'm also going to explore Paul's prayers,** and what he clearly tells us *he* prayed about, and then use those passages as a source of inspiration to take your prayers "to the next level".

If you've ever wondered what to pray about, or ever wondered how certain people can apparently pray for hours, this sermon might be able to help. I think you're going to discover a *bunch* of things you may not be praying about – but should be.

Surely, we're all humble enough to realize we could use a refresher on praying once in a while. Surely, we're not always batting 100% on effective interaction with God. Surely we all have slumps in our spiritual life. I do. I certainly do. And one reason for this sermon in fact, is because I wanted to focus on prayer more right now because I realized I needed to tune up this aspect of my life too.

If we're not careful, our praying slips into "saying our prayers", rather than praying. Can you hear the difference? Parents even often tell their kids: "Go say your prayers". I never would use that expression with my kids. I want them to *pray*, not just "SAY their prayers". I want them to speak from their *heart* – not from a script, or a prayer book or memorized kid's prayers like "God is great, God is good, now we thank you for our food, Amen".

It's rote. It's a bunch of empty words. It's **spiritual fast food – devoid of any nutrient value.** Jesus taught that we shouldn't assume we'll be heard just for having "many words" (**Matthew 6:6-8**). Jesus would be against doing so many laps around the rosary bead chain. God's complaint is that we claim to worship Him but our *hearts* are far from Him (**Matthew 15:8**). God wants our hearts. God pleads, "*Give me your heart, my Son*" – **Proverbs 23:26**. So don't think that just because you get

down on your knees everyday and say a bunch of hasty words to your God, that somehow you're having some effective, fervent praying going on (**James 5:16**).

When we pray, God doesn't want our mind and heart locked in to "fast forward". He wants us to *stop*, focus on what we're doing, and do it privately, unseen by others. God wants us to *realize* who we're coming to, *honor* Him profoundly and appreciate His holy invitation into His family. So that's why we were taught to begin "***Our Father in heaven....***".

Regardless of how bad or how good your physical father was or is, you have a new father now: God Himself, who has begotten you into His very family. Some scriptures also clearly teach we've been *adopted* into the family of God. That's the actual Greek, no getting around it. So God our Father wants us to appreciate being inducted into His God family, if you will. A Father is part of family. A son or daughter of God – which you *are* if you have received God's spirit – is family (**2 Cor. 6:18; Rom. 8:14-17**) – so we can actually call Almighty God, "Abba" – or "Dear Father", Daddy. Wow! Are you hearing it? Are you getting it?

So Abba wants to hear from you and the rest of His children. Let's not disappoint Him.

If you wonder *why* you should pray at all, especially since God says He already knows your needs (**Matthew 6:8**) and knows what you're likely to say before you do – go to my website and look up the 2 sermons titled "WHY Pray, part 1 and 2". There's a lot there to explain the "Why" behind prayer. So I won't go over that material again here. ***I'm focusing today on WHAT to pray about.***

WHY do we need to take stock of our prayers from time to time?

One good reason: prayer often dramatically changes lives as well as the very course of history. Do we keep front and center in our awareness that someone's whole life, someone's whole course and direction, can – and does – diametrically change because someone prayed for that person!? Because *you* prayed. Or maybe, because someone thought about you, your marriage, your spiritually condition, someone prayed for you and changed your whole life.

And if we understand the power a few words to God can have, surely we will want to get very good at it, do it frequently, even throughout the day, as we understand that real effective prayer *reflects* a strong relationship with God. It's almost chicken and egg. ***Praying causes a strong relationship with God and that strong relationship improves our praying.***

Lessons from Jesus' MODEL PRAYER

We've all certainly heard many sermons, I'm sure, on the so-called "Lord's Prayer". It was actually more of an outline, a model of things to include in a prayer after His disciples realized they needed more instruction on effective praying. But in any sermon about *what* to pray about, we must do at least a quick review of what Jesus said to be sure to include; things in the model prayer, commonly called "the Our Father" prayer. That was just a model. A record of one of Jesus' own personal prayers is in John 17, but let's just do a quick 5 minute review of lessons from the Jesus' model prayer in Matthew 6.

I've already said – as in the model prayer – that we start by recognizing God as our Father. *For God to become our Father, you and I have to accept His call, repent of our sins that fall short of His glory, accept King Jesus as our Savior in our behalf, and start to live by His way, as a way of life. Then thank Him for being the kind of Father He IS, and praise Him for that.*

Since Jesus is also fully God, we can also pray to Jesus. For example, Acts 7:59 says as Stephen was being stoned, he was “*calling on God saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’*”. There is no example of praying to a dead saint, to Mary, or to an angel, or to anyone other than God. Praying to anyone other than God is idolatry and a sin. But Jesus is incredible. I sometimes pray, “Jesus, you’re just so awesome. Lord, you are my *brother*. You are my *best friend*, even though you are the Son of God and King of Kings. I’m in awe that you would even notice any one of us. Thank you!”

Prayer is more than a list of “gimmies”. It is praising, adoring, glorifying and worshiping God first and foremost. Having said that, Jesus and Paul and others taught us to ask for things and blessings as well.

As a quick review of *this* often-covered material, the model prayer goes on to say we should be praying daily for (Matthew 6:9-15):

- blessing and **hallowing God’s name**. Praise Him in your praying every day. Do not allow yourself to ever get into the sinful habit of using God’s name, or Jesus’ name, in vain – as an expression. That’s so wrong. But instead, praise and bless God. Remember you have the opportunity to BLESS GOD! *We think of God blessing us, but there are psalms after psalms that talk about us blessing God.* “Bless the Lord eternal, Oh my soul”... one of my favorite hymns I sing. (Ps. 68:26; 16:7; 26:12; and all through Psalms 103, 104, 115, 134, 135. Also Gen. 24:48; 1 Chron 29:10, 20; Neh 8:6).
- **“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done...”**. Do we cry and sigh for the abominations, the tortures, the famines, the genocides, the evils of this world and cry out to God to send Jesus back soon? Do we do that every day? *It is those who sigh and cry who receive God’s notice, God’s mark (Ezek 9:3-4) who will be spared* when the Day of Wrath begins. I like to break down into new reasons each day why I’d like to see King Jesus return: the tortures must stop, the genocide going on in Darfur, the environmental destruction, stopping the wars and on and on.
- **We are to daily pray for our daily bread – both physically and spiritually**. Ask God to supply your spiritual nourishment daily and the energy and desire to get out there and pick up the spiritual manna He does send you. Remember the language is “give *us* this day *our* daily bread”. That heavily implies we need to be asking God to be provider of the needs of others, outside our immediate family, as well as our own needs.
- We are to daily ask for **forgiveness** (“Forgive us our debts”) for our sins, shortcomings and areas where we missed the mark of righteous living. I think part of that is asking Him to come into our lives more so we can represent Him more as one of His ambassadors on earth (2 Cor. 5:20). We need to ask this forgiveness daily.
- “..as we forgive our debtors”. We ask God to give us a forgiving heart, and every day we should think of someone we are upset with and ask God to bless them, and ask God to give us a forgiving heart, or else we won’t be forgiven. “As *we* forgive...” implies we should be asking God to also help those we know are having a tough time forgiving others.
- **“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”**. Again, the “us” in that language shows we should also ask God to deliver people we know who are not

doing well in their battles with Satan. “Deliver US from...” – yes, we need to be praying also for others.

Luke 22:39-40

“Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, **“Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”** Jesus also added in **John 17:15** – **“keep them from the evil one”**.

- End by glorifying God – “For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever”
- We end with **“In Jesus’ Name”**. I will soon give a whole sermon on what “in Jesus’ name” means. It’s not just a formula of words we say at the end of a prayer. In fact, you won’t find one recorded prayer in the Bible that ends with “in Jesus name, Amen.” It’s much more than just saying, “By Jesus’ authority”. Much more. Wait for the sermon.

So, how are we doing? Already, if you’re honest with yourself, there are some things there we probably don’t do every day and need to brush up. Some people use **prayer lists**. I have a prayer list too, but sometimes, some days, I suggest you put your list aside and just talk to God from your heart. Other days, when it’s a bit tough to get into the rhythm of prayer, perhaps use your list to “prime the pump” as it were, with ideas. But how would you like it if every time your son comes to talk to you, he has a list. I think we’d think nothing of it here and there, but if every time he’s reading a list rather than just talking from his heart ...you get the point.

The **“prayer list”** is good for listing especially names of people and conditions and situations where people are asking for help. It certainly is good in helping us to remember, not to forget important situations and people who need help. So get a balance on lists. They have their time and place.

Samuel teaches us that its actually a sin not to pray for God’s people and one another. Read **1 Sam 12:19-23**, especially verse 23.

Sometimes we don’t even know what to say – but God’s Spirit (**Romans 8:26-27**) “makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”. I’m not sure how to explain all that, but let it suffice that what I’ve just read is what God’s word *says*.

ASK – in FAITH, BELIEVING

I think a big reason we struggle, is that we don’t pray enough – and even when we do, we simply don’t do something very simple: **we just don’t ask often enough**. So many things sit there without being mentioned to God. Even though He already knows what we need, He tells us to ask! I explained that in depth in my sermons on “Why Pray”. But let’s learn to ask.

Matthew 7:7-12

“ASK, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

So King Jesus is saying, “just ASK!” That’s not terribly hard.

Mark 11:22-24

“So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, *whatever things you ask when you pray, **believe that you receive them, and you will have them.***”

But asking for just selfish reasons won’t work too well either, apparently. That’s why praying for others is so effective. AS we pray for others, God is more apt to hear our own requests too.

James 4:2-4

“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. **Yet you do not have because you do not ask.** 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on *your* pleasures.”

So even when we ask, God is more moved by our asking if we are asking especially for someone else’s need instead of just our own. For example, we’re told in James also to pray for one another, so that *you* may be healed. (**James 5:16**).

John 14:14

“If you **ask** anything in My name, I will do it.”

John 16:23-24

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 **Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive,** that your joy may be full.”

We’re also able to confidently ask for God’s intervention, because we are living a way that is pleasing to Him, and asking according to His will.

1 John 3:21-23

“Beloved, *if our heart does not condemn us* [why we have to repent frequently and overcome sin!] we have confidence toward God. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, ***because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*** 23 And this is His commandment: that we should **believe** on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and **love** one another, as He gave us commandment.”

John 15:7

“IF you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

Some of us don’t receive as much as we hoped we would, because we’re not showing love to the other children of God. Jesus takes that personally, since members of God’s church are considered part of HIS own body. Be sure to hear my sermon about “*Christ is Manifested by His Body, part 2*”. It really goes into that.

Don't underestimate God's power to bless you beyond your wildest dreams, if we ask Him for things which especially will benefit His Body, the church, and if we are living in a way that brings glory to His name and His way.

Ephesians 3:20-21

"Now to Him who **is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

There's also the very interesting passage in **2 Kings 13:14-19**. Please turn there. Joash was asked to do something – and because he didn't do it aggressively – he was given less than he could have had!

2 Kings 13:14-19 TEV

14 The prophet Elisha was sick with a fatal disease, and as he lay dying, King Jehoash of Israel went to visit him. "My father, my father!" he exclaimed as he wept. "You have been the mighty defender of Israel!" ("the chariots of Israel, and their horsemen").

15 "Get a bow and some arrows," Elisha ordered him. Jehoash got them, 16 and Elisha told him to get ready to shoot. The king did so, and Elisha placed his hands on the king's hands. 17 Then, following the prophet's instructions, the king opened the window that faced toward Syria. "Shoot the arrow!" Elisha ordered. As soon as the king shot the arrow, the prophet exclaimed, "You are the LORD's arrow, with which he will win victory over Syria. You will fight the Syrians in Aphek until you defeat them."

18 Then Elisha told the king to take the other arrows and strike the ground with them. The king **struck the ground three times, and then stopped. 19 This made Elisha angry, and he said to the king, "You should have struck five or six times, and then you would have won complete victory over the Syrians; but now you will defeat them only three times."**

How much more could we be having spiritual victory – but we're Laodecian in our requests to God? We're too lazy to claim the victory that God wants for us!

Now let's look at some things God tells us to pray about, and then we'll go into PAUL'S PRAYERS – and I know you'll be heartened and inspired by the deep, deep level of praying Paul did, so hang in there.

OTHER TOPICS TO PRAY FOR

Pray FOR your ENEMIES, not just "about" them:

Matthew 5:44-46

"But I say to you, love your enemies, **bless those who curse you**, do good to those who hate you, and pray **for those who spitefully use you and persecute you**, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

OK, let's be honest with ourselves. We might pray about our enemies in one way or another. But be honest: are you praying *for* them? Are you asking God to forgive them, to actually *bless* them, as He commands us. Are we finding ways to do good to them. As usual, I preach to myself on these things. Some of us are so tormented by certain people that we might pray about them, for them, but is our

prayer that they die? Or that God strike them down? Be honest! We need to be praying that God brings them to see what they're doing, to bring salvation into their lives, to heal them, to help them be happy in a godly way, to bless their marriage and health, and so on. That's tough to do from the heart! Let's face it. But that's certainly a topic to be praying for.

Pray for More of God's SPIRIT

Luke 11:9-13

"So I say to you, **ASK**, and it will be given to you; seek, and you *will* find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

Implied in asking for more of the Holy Spirit, is to ask for God to grant us *fruit* of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Notice it is **FRUIT of the spirit, not fruits**. It says the fruit "**is**"—not "fruits are". Have you noticed that before. If you have God's spirit powerfully working in you, you'll have all the parts of this one fruit. It is *one fruit, with many parts*, like one apple has a stem, skin, pulp, seeds, but it's one apple. Actually all the fruit is summed up in the word "godly love". We can't go put the fruit on the tree externally. No – the fruit comes in its season, when the tree is good, when its roots go down deeply into Christ. We are the branches, Jesus is the tree or vine. The fruit comes when we are abiding in Christ. I'll speak more on this later in a separate sermon on fruit.

Pray that the God of all love give us more of His "agape" love, more of His joy, more of His peace. He is the God of Peace, after all. We need to also *ask* for more "**longsuffering**" – a very patient patience in the face even of aggravation. **Kindness**. Now there's a good one. I'm praying for more kindness. **Goodness**. Only one is "good" and that is God. You and I are "good" only to the extent God lives and works in us. **Faithfulness**. In one way or another, we've all been unfaithful to God or to each other. Pray for faithfulness. **Gentleness**. We're a rude society more and more. God wants us to be known as *kind* people who are gentle with one another. Again, I obviously need more of God's spirit – and perhaps you'll admit the same – if we see we need to grow in gentleness. **Self-control**.

Oh dear. God help us. God help me. Pray for me on these things too. Fruit is to help others with.

Are we asking for these things each day? Did you today? Yesterday? And hey – don't forget: Elisha asked for a double portion of the Spirit that was on Elijah! Would you and I have asked that? I hope so (**2 Kings 2:9**). And Elisha was granted it! Learn from that!

Pray for JERUSALEM's PEACE

Psalms 122:6-7

"**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:** "May they prosper who love you. 7 Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces."

Psalm 137:6

“If I do not remember you [Jerusalem], Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth --
If I do not exalt Jerusalem, Above my chief joy.”

Jeremiah 51:50

“You who have escaped the sword, Get away! Do not stand still!
Remember the LORD afar off, ***And let Jerusalem come to your mind.***”

OK, when did you last pray for Jerusalem? You’ve got your work cut out! Go do it! And don’t forget, whoever curses Israel, God will curse (**Gen. 27:29**). If you have any anti-Jew, or anti-Israelite sentiment in your heart, you’d better get over it and repent of it quickly. Don’t forget: Our Savior Himself was of the tribe of Judah!

Pray for GOD’S TRUE MINISTERS:

There are many verses that talk about praying for the spiritual laborers.

Matthew 9:38

“Therefore **pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers** into His harvest.” (**Luke 10:2**)

Brethren, we need true ministers who are willing to serve – not for the glory, not for the pay, not for recognition – but because they have a heart for getting out God’s word. We need servants of God willing to go to Asia, Africa, South America, as well as to the homeless and the needy in this land.

We need pastors who remember and teach and practice what true religion is: to help and look out for the widow, the orphans. Let me ask you: if you had to stand before Jesus right now and tell him ONE widow you care for, ONE orphan you’ve fed and clothed, would you be able to give a name? If not, how pure is your religion? Are you practicing your faith - - or just having a social experience you call “going to church”?

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

“Finally, brethren, **pray for us**, that *the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified*, just as it is with you, **2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men**; for not all have faith.”

Notice that even here, Paul is not just asking for prayers for him per se, but that God’s word will be preached and not hindered.

Ephesians 6:18-19

“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints -- 19 **and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly** to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Colossians 4:3-4

“meanwhile *praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word*, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 **that I may make it manifest**, as I ought to speak.”

FOR ALL MEN, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEADERS, AND THOSE IN AUTHORITY

1 Timothy 2:1-2

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, **prayers, intercessions**, and ***giving of thanks*** be made **for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority**, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life* in all godliness and reverence.”

The kings whom Paul was referring to when he wrote this passage, were Emperor Nero and King Agrippa. Both very corrupt, evil men. But he says to actually even give God thanks for them. Some dismiss this by emphasizing that Paul says “*that we may live a quiet life*”, but still, how do we get around “giving thanks *for*” them then?

So yes, I pray regularly *for* our President, for our House Speaker, for our governor and many others, whether or not I like their ethics or politics. I certainly pray for our President’s safety. When a new and different president gets in – perhaps totally different as a person – I will pray just as fervently for him, or her, as well.

DANIEL actually asked God’s forgiveness for the whole nation of Judah. You can read about that in **Daniel 9**. God was so impressed with Daniel’s prayer that he revealed some knowledge to him right after that. ***Have YOU prayed for God’s forgiveness and mercy on the USA, or for your own country?***

Pray for ONE ANOTHER

James 5:16

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and **pray for one another, that** YOU may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Pray daily for WISDOM

James 1:4-6

“If any of you lacks **wisdom, let him ask of God**, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind”

Do you lack wisdom? I assure you, I do. I assure you, YOU do. Search your memory banks? Did you ask for wisdom today? Yesterday? In the last week? You’ve got your work cut out! Go do it.

Remember Solomon? God came to Him and told him to ask – and guess what Solomon asked for?

1 Kings 3:5

“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask! What shall I give you?”

Remember what happened? Solomon asked only for wisdom and understanding (verses 7-9), and yet God was so impressed by that, that God unconditionally granted him MORE than he asked for: riches and honor. Then God added something conditional: “walk before Me as your Father David did, and I will give you a long life.” (**1 Kings 3:10-14**)

Let’s move on.

At the end of the year of tithing for helping the poor, God says we are to pray for a blessing.
(you can read that in **Deut. 26:12-15**). Do you do that? Are you doing that?

Pray that we be COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE THE COMING DAYS OF WRATH

Luke 21:36

“Watch therefore, and **pray always** *that you may be counted worthy to escape* all these things that will come to pass, **and to stand before the Son of Man.**”

The KJV puts the comma after “always”, which makes it sound like if we pray a lot, we’ll automatically be counted worthy to escape. Perhaps. But I’d rather take the safe route, and do what the newer translations say, pray *that* you may be counted worthy to escape. Either way, prayer is a big part of being counted worthy to escape the time of worst trouble coming on the earth that it has ever seen.

Hmm. How are we doing? When was the last time you uttered those words, “Father, I pray that I – and my family (spiritual family too) – will be counted worthy to escape the things about to happen, and to be counted worthy to *stand* before King Jesus. Help me to walk as He walked, to walk worthy of the high calling you have given me. Thank you, dear Abba, our dear Father.”

Matt 24:20-22

“**And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.** 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

Surprise: If God wills we be among those taken captive in the years coming, this next prayer may be the most difficult....PRAY FOR PEACE of our captors even in captivity!

Jeremiah 29:7

“And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and **pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.**”

Isn’t that incredible?

Now let’s raise this sermon up a notch by studying the prayers of our brother, the Apostle Paul.

LESSONS FROM PAUL’S PRAYERS

There’s a best selling book out there on the Prayer of Jabez. Well today we’ll look at the prayers of Paul. I gotta tell you: as I analyzed this next stage, I had to sit back and comment to a friend that I’m just not in Paul’s league when it comes to praying! He prays about things that I just don’t think very many do pray about nowadays.

As we read the description of what Paul says he prayed about, stop and think: do his points sound anything at all to the list of things you and I pray about?

I’ve been reading the points in his prayers lately and have been incorporating them into my praying, and wow, what an impact! And how humbling, showing me how lowly my prayers still are, compared to my brother Paul’s prayers. “Lord, teach us to pray!” – I say in behalf of *all* of us!

I hope you will in fact study these verses I’m about to give you on your own, and dig deeper, much deeper into these prayers of Paul – and see what other gold you can mine from these verses. Make it a group discussion perhaps after this sermon. Write me, tell me what you come up with.

Paul prayed that we MATURE, grow more complete and perfect.

2 Corinthians 13:9

“For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also *we pray, that you may be made complete.*”

Other translations say “for your perfection” – NIV. After all, even Jesus said “become you therefore perfect, or complete, mature..” (**Matthew 5:48**). Do we pray for one another’s maturity? Paul did. Instead of gossiping about someone’s immaturity, how about praying privately to God about that person, that God would help him or her – and you too – to mature spiritually, to grow up spiritually, to become more like God. Ask God to fill this person with His spirit, to cause things in his life to encourage him or her to respond as Jesus would. And while you’re at it, then ask God to help you see your own spiritual immaturity and to overcome.

This was a constant topic in Paul’s writings, as well as in the teaching of all God’s people.

Philippians 3:12-14

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Colossians 1:27-28

“.....Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 *Him* we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, *that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*”

I’m giving a sermon soon on what “being in Christ” means. Paul also elsewhere talked about being like a mother in travail, “until Christ is formed in you” (**Galatians 4:19**). That’s when we’re complete: when Christ is formed in us.

Pray for one another’s INSIGHT, AND GRASP OF WHAT IT IS GOD IS OFFERING US!

Ephesians 1:15-21

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in *my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*”

Did you hear it? He’s simply saying: “I’m praying that you guys ‘get the picture!’”. That you *see* what it is God is offering us. That we begin to see how *powerful* our God is - - more powerful than anything we’re confronting in our daily lives. But most of all, I pray we begin to understand what it is we’ve been called to! It’s so awesome, and I know we don’t *get it*, because if we did, we’d be praising and thanking and overcoming *so much more* than we *are!*”

Be sure to go back and hear my sermon on “Why were *you* called” for a refresher on this. I think you’ll find it inspiring.

Now back to your prayers. Do *we* pray for one another, that we each will *see* better what our calling is? That we'll not ever fear what man can do for us? Pray for me on these things too. I'm just a weak flesh and blood being – like you – and I need your prayers too. Are these things on your prayer list?

Paul prayed that we grow in effectively sharing our faith in Christ

Philemon 4-6 “I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, 5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, **6 *that the sharing of your faith may become effective*** by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.”

Paul prays that we grow in understanding God's will for us – and to live in that will of God

Colossians 4:12

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, ***that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.***”

Colossians 1:9-14

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask **that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may **walk worthy of the Lord**, fully **pleasing Him**, being **fruitful in every good work** and **increasing in the knowledge of God**; 11 **strengthened with all might**, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 **giving thanks** to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

That we be counted worthy of our calling – living a life that brings glory to Lord Jesus

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

“Therefore we also **pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling**, and **fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness** and the work of faith with power, 12 **that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you**, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul prays our love abounds, and we live without offense, and be filled with righteous fruit

Philippians 1:9-11

“And this I pray, ***that your love may abound*** still more and more **in knowledge** and all discernment, 10 that you may **approve the things that are excellent**, that you may **be sincere and without offense** till the day of Christ, 11 being **filled with the fruits of righteousness *which are by Jesus Christ***, to the glory and praise of God.”

Pray that God guides my sermon soon on the difference between human righteousness – and Godly righteousness, the righteousness that is by faith, and through Christ - - not by self-improvement.

Praying Jesus' Prayer for ONENESS in John 17

Finally, a lesson from one of Jesus' own prayers in John 17. The whole prayer in John 17 is chock full of lessons on what to pray about. I want to focus on the last few verses of His prayer. And I pray each of us will pray this with our brother, for we sure need what He says here in John 17:20-26. Please be turning to John 17:20-26.

There was one theme on Jesus' mind at the end. There was ONE thing that makes it clear who His Body is – they will be as one, one IN Christ, in perfect love for one another. And also notice why he wanted us to be living and acting as one.

Let's read what Jesus says.

John 17:20-26

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that **they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one**: 23 I in them, and You in Me; **that they may be made perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, **that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.**"

Brethren, Jesus is in me, and in you. And if we are in His body, we are in Christ. If you haven't heard my sermon on Knowing Christ by Knowing His Body, be sure to hear it. It is in our oneness, as one team, as one family, rooting for one another – instead of "he said" and "she said" and all the ugly gossip – **it is in our oneness that Lord Jesus is glorified.** It is in our oneness that we get rid of sectarianism, of division into different groups. That doesn't glorify God! Especially those of you who attend with groups who think they are the only children of God on earth and begin to act like the Pharisees, acting aloof, above everyone else, better than thou types.

Isaiah 65:5

"Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day."

We've got to come together, children of God and quit making our conduct be smoke in His nose.

I pray that we all follow Jesus' example in praying for our oneness. Think about that: even the Son of God prayed for our oneness. So obviously, we should be as well. I think we should forget the lines that church pastors are putting up to keep us away from one another.

Anyway, we could go on forever and ever about things to pray about. ***But won't you join me in printing off a copy of this sermon and letting some of its points help you remember to be praying for all these things God tells to be presenting before Him?***

And most of all – praise Him, glorify Him, worship Him.

And as you pray, don't be shy to pray as the Bible teaches us: sometimes with bowed head, sometimes with upstretched arms - - as a child reaching up to his or her dear Abba. I recently have spoken on that – I think in the series on the Tabernacle of David.

And pray for the items we talked about here – praising God as our Father, praying for one another in depth, praying we be counted worthy to escape, praying for more of the Holy Spirit, for wisdom, for the fruit of the spirit. Let's pray we become one.

But most of all, pray more. Anything we put ahead of daily prayer is an idol. Smash all idols – and pray and worship God, the true God, and His Son – our God Jesus Christ, who is also part of the one God we worship.

Grace to you, and peace – in Jesus' name. Pray for me also, as I pray for all of you listeners to this website. Tell others about this site, and perhaps even listen in as a group together, and be sure to discuss the sermon and the scriptures together afterwards for a few minutes. Until next time, your fellow brother and fellow prayer partner, Philip Shields.

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