

“My Prayer Life” - Ephesians 3:16-19 – March 18th, 2018

- I want to talk with you today about something the Lord has really been ministering to me as of late concerning our prayer lives.
 - As I was praying and preparing today's teaching, I was once again reminded of how amazing the Apostle Paul's prayer life was.
 - It's not just that Paul prayed, it's what Paul prayed, and perhaps even more importantly why it is that Paul was a man of prayer.
-
- I'm hoping you'll kindly indulge me for just a moment as I first draw your attention to the how, when, what and why of his prayer.
 - I do so because it will be germane to our understanding of the importance of what I believe the Lord has for us in today's text.
 - First, notice back in verse fourteen where we're told how Paul prayed namely, that of his humbling himself and kneeling to pray.
-
- Secondly, it's important to remember when Paul prayed such that, he was imprisoned as he awaited trial being falsely accused.
 - The reason mention this is because Paul didn't only pray while imprisoned, he also wrote this epistle to the Ephesians as well.
 - That's how and when Paul prayed, but I'd like to spend a bit of time on what Paul prayed before we get to the why he prayed.
-
- In verse 16, he prayed that they would receive from God's glorious riches
 - In verse 16, he also prayed that they would be strengthened with power through His Spirit in their inner being
 - In verse 17, he prayed that Jesus Christ would be at home in their hearts through faith
 - In verse 17, he also prayed that they would be rooted and established in love
 - In verse 18, he prayed that they might have power, together with all God's holy people
 - In verse 18, he also prayed that they would grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ
 - In verse 19, he prayed that they would know this love that surpasses knowledge
 - In verse 19, he also prayed that they would be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God
-
- This brings us to the why Paul prayed what he prayed, which is what I want us to spend the remainder of our time together on.
 - I would suggest that there are two reasons as to why Paul prayed, the first of which is that he prayed and received this himself.
 - Actually, this ties into the second reason, which is that Paul loved them so much; he wanted them to experience what he had.
-
- Here's where I'm going with this, all of these aforementioned blessings listed came vis-à-vis the prayer life of the Apostle Paul.
 - However, that also means that had Paul himself not asked for this in prayer, he would not have been the recipient of all of this.
 - It's for this reason I think every one of us should ask ourselves the question of what have we forfeited because we didn't pray.
-
- James 4:2b - You do not have because you do not ask God.
-
- 1 John 5:14-15 - 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.
-
- Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
-
- James 1:17 - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
-
- Mat 7:7-11 - 7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!
-
- Luke 18:1 -- Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
-
- As I'm sure you know, I have been emphasizing our Tuesday night church prayer meeting on the first Tuesday of each month.
 - One of the reasons for this is because I love this church that I'm privileged to pastor so much that I want all God has for us.
 - While I realize what I'm about to say may seem like I'm being melodramatic, I say it none-the-less, we won't make it if we don't.
-
- E.M. Bounds, Possibilities of Prayer - "Defeat awaits a non-praying church. Success is sure to follow a church given to much prayer. The supernatural element in the church, without which it must fail, comes only through prayer".
-
- I'll bring it to a close by simply suggesting that this is true not only for us as a church, but so too is this true for us as Christians.
 - I'm reminded of a hymn of old, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," which was written in 1820 by a man named Joseph Scriven.
 - The numerous tragedies this man had experienced in his life inspired the writing of this hymn, which is all about our prayer life.
-
- What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer!
 - Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry, Everything to God in prayer!
 - Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 - Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 - Are we weak and heavy-laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer.
 - Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer! In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.
 - Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised, Thou wilt all our burdens bear; May we ever, Lord, be bringing All to Thee in earnest prayer.
 - Soon in glory bright, unclouded, There will be no need for prayer— Rapture, praise, and endless worship Will be our sweet portion there.