

51-01-06.wpd --A Pattern for Prayer

prayer, thanksgiving, knowledge, power, deliverance, redemption  
Col 1:9-14

Powerful prayer for others flows from the realities of our salvation.

**INTRODUCTION:** (text as Scripture reading)

--*Faith* is a built into human nature. All of us live by faith, whether we say so or not. We place faith in what *we hear*, what *we experience*, and what *we try to figure out ourselves*. *Faith* leaves a mark in history, even we place it in the wrong idea or the wrong people. Thank God that He has always been involved *our history*. But through the Incarnation of His Son, God became more *fully* and *intimately* part of *the human story*. --God wants this powerful, creative tool of faith not to *adhere to* and *live by the vain imaginations and irrealities of human invention*, but to *grasp divine truth* and *live by the reality of His kingdom*. This is why Paul's prayer for the Colossian Christians is a wonderful **pattern** for intercession. **HOM.idea**.

--Let's look at three key elements is Paul's prayer in this **text**.

**I. Prayer for Divine Knowledge, v.9**

- A. Paul wrote this epistle in a society where mystery cults based on Greek Gnosticism were extremely popular.
  1. One of Paul's reasons for writing Colossians was to confront Gnostic ideas that were infiltrating the church.
  2. Mystery cults had spread all over the Roman Empire, and each taught a special "*secret knowledge*" necessary for salvation.
- B. Paul prayed, "*asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will...*" [*epignosis*= "full or complete knowledge"] (Gnostic teachers charged for "*secret knowledge*." God gives *His knowledge directly and freely*.)
- C. God's will for us in Christ is a salvation based not on human ideas, emotional feelings, or our own thinking, but on knowledge from God Himself "*through all spiritual wisdom and understanding*." (it may be scoffed at by non-Christians, but to us it is "Good News"-- 1 Cor 1:21-24, For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and

Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**TRANS:** To pray powerfully for someone, pray for God to fill them "*with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding*." **Powerful prayer for others flows from the realities of our salvation**. Divine knowledge about those realities is especially important as a foundation for the next part of Paul's prayer...

**II. Prayer for a God-Pleasing Lifestyle, v.10-11**

- A. Gnosticism, which taught that only the *spiritual, not the physical*, had any eternal value, resulted in one of two practices:
  1. Since the fleshly body was foreign to true humanity, it needed to be *denied, despised and treated harshly* [*asceticism*], OR...
  2. Since the spirit alone counted, nothing done with the body really mattered, even *sexual promiscuity or gluttony* [*hedonism*].  
(**Neither of these concepts reflects the mind of God.**)
- B. All of God's Word, from naked gardeners in Genesis to physically resurrected saints in Revelation, validates the value of our bodies, hand-designed by our Creator, not only to reflect His image, but to be the visible vehicle of obedience to His will-- 2 Cor 5:10, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for **the things done while in the body**, whether good or bad.
- C. Our knowledge of God's will must be put into practice (re-read v.10-11), *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience* (God is extremely concerned about "the things done while in the body," in other words, *how we live out our lives on earth*.)
- D. There are **two requirements** for "*bearing fruit in every good work*":
  1. "*growing in the knowledge of God*"-- God wants us to be completely open to Him in a direct personal relationship [Before Adam and Eve sinned, whenever God approached them for fellowship, He expected to find them unashamedly naked and open and ready to know Him in a direct and intimate way. Satan tricked them into another kind of "knowledge" (gnosis) that caused them to fear a naked, open relationship with God. After that, humans began a long history of hiding from God and from each other.]
  - a. To maintain an open, direct relationship with God, we must confess our sin (which our first parents failed to do), and

*remove whatever comes between us and God* [Adam and Eve, even in God's presence, kept the fig leaf coverings they had made for themselves, which were symbolic of trying to hide themselves with their own works].

- b. God had given humanity "good work" to do back in Eden, and "*bearing fruit in every good work*" was dependent then, as it still is today, on maintaining a shamelessly naked openness with God.
2. "*being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might*" --In Jesus, God experienced firsthand the *hardships and adversities* in a fallen creation. God gives us spiritual strengthening not just for doing miracles or witnessing powerfully, but for manifesting "*endurance and patience*," just as Jesus did -- Heb 12:2-3. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

**TRANS:** There is one more important aspect of how **powerful prayer for others flows from the realities of our salvation**, and that is....

### **III. Prayer for a Thoughtfully Thankful, Heart, (read v.12-14)**

- A. If you ever fall away from a joyful attitude of gratitude to God, you can get back on track by meditating on what Christ's work on the Cross accomplished: it "*qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light*"
- B. Make a list and pray it aloud:
  1. Thank You, God for rescuing me "*from the dominion of darkness*."
  2. Thank You for bringing me "*into the kingdom of [Your] Son*."
  3. Thank You for *redeeming* my body, soul and spirit.
  4. Thank You that, in Your Son Jesus, I have "*the forgiveness of sins*."

### **CONCLUSION:**

--**Powerful prayer for others flows from the realities of our salvation**. But this kind of powerful praying is something we need to be doing for ourselves, as well as others.... Let's do that as we close in prayer: "Lord, fill us with the knowledge of Your will, and let our lives manifest that will, for we are forever grateful for what you have done for us....Amen."

Col 1:9-14 (NIV) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

{10} And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, {11} being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,

and joyfully {12} giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. {13} For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, {14} in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.