

“THE POWER OF PRAYER”

Ephesians 1:15-23

INTRODUCTION:

A. THE THREE-FOLD PRAYER OF PAUL

1. He prayed for the spirit of wisdom and revelation.
2. He prayed for believers to understand our hope.
3. He prayed that we might experience God’s power.

B. Paul was a man of prayer from the day he met Christ on the road to Damascus and said, *"Who art thou, Lord?"* and *"What wilt thou have me to do?"*

1. Paul personally practiced prayer.

Acts 9:11 *“And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, **behold, he prayeth...**”*

Acts 20:36-37 *“And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. {37} And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,..”*

Rom 1:9-11 *“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that **without ceasing** I make mention of you always in my prayers; {10} Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. {11} For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;..”*

a. See Philip. 1:9-11

2. He asked others to pray

Rom 15:30-31 *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; {31} That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;..”*

Eph 6:18-20 *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; {19} And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, {20} For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, **as I ought to speak.**”*

Col 4:2-4 *“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; {3} Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: {4} **That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.**”*

2 Thess. 3:1 *"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:.."*

3. He taught about prayer.

Rom 8:26-27 *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. {27} And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."*

I. THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER BECAUSE IT INVOLVES PEOPLE

A. Prayer is powerful because it may be employed by any believer in Christ who qualifies simply on scriptural grounds.

1. Mark 11:23: *"Whosoever...saith to this mountain."*

2. The key is *"whosoever."* If you are facing a mountain of opposition... remember you are a *"whosoever."*

3. You may not have wealth or fame; you may not be a worker in the most prestigious church in town, but at least you are a *"whosoever."*

4. Finances or social status have no bearing on qualifications for prayer.

II. PRAYER IS POWERFUL BECAUSE IT IS A FORCE THAT TRANSCENDS ALL BARRIERS OF TIME AND PLACE (SPACE).

A. Prayer is unique in that it not only transcends all barriers of time, but its power and results can outlive the person who offered it.

Rev 5:8 *"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."*

1. Jacob wrestled all night in prayer and the angel couldn't leave until Jacob let him go. He was given favor with his brother Esau, and God blessed him.

2. Daniel prayed in the lion's den and God delivered him, and King Cyrus promoted him.

3. The three Hebrew children prayed in the fiery furnace, and were delivered without the smell of smoke of their clothes, and were also promoted.

4. Jesus prayed all night and as a result, knew who to call as Apostles. ***He prayed in the Garden and was able to submit unto God's will.***

5. Peter prayed on a house top, and received a new call to go to the Gentiles. ***John prayed from a prison on Patmos and received the Revelation.***

6. Paul prayed by a river side. ***He and Silas prayed from a prison cell and were delivered and had an evangelistic meeting with souls being saved.***

John Wesley: *"God will do nothing but by prayer, **and everything with it.**"*

S.D. Gordon: *"Prayer is striking the winning blow; service is gathering up the results." (Prayer leads to results.)*

E.M. Bounds: *"God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be; the mightier the forces against evil."*

III. PRAYER IS POWERFUL BECAUSE ITS POWER MAY BE FOCUSED ON ANY NEED NO MATTER WHAT THE PREVAILING CIRCUM-STANCES; **BY IT WE TAP THE INFINITE RESOURCES OF GOD**

A. "Whatsoever" is a powerful word, especially when referring to the potential blessings that await the saints of God, who have *learned to pray earnestly*.

Mat 21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing, ye shall receive.*"

1 John 5:14 "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:.."

John 14:14 "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

John 15:7 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

John 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: **that** (so that) whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 16:23-24 "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. {24} Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: *ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*"

1. The focus of prayer when offered in line with God's will knows no bounds.

John G. Lake: "We need to get our eyes off the ground and look up to the throne room."

3. The measure of God's response to our prayers is *according to our comprehension of His ability and willingness, to work for us and through us.*

Phil. 2:13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

IV. PRAYER IS POWERFUL BECAUSE AN ALL-KNOWING, OMNI-PRESENT, AND ALL-POWERFUL GOD REPRESENTS THE TRUE POWER BEHIND EVERY ANSWERED PRAYER.

A. Bible does not say, "Have faith in prayer" or "have faith in faith," but it does say, "have faith in God." (**Mark 11:22**)

1. Marginal rendering of this verse says to, "Have the faith of God." Speak to the mountain and it shall be moved (**See Mark 11:23**)

B. God is our source of power.

2. "In prayer we willingly do the work which God will not do, in order to get Him to do the work we cannot do."

3. To spend little time with Jesus is to accomplish little in life or for Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

A. How to pray that we might personally experience the power of prayer.

1. Pray committedly; *have a set time of prayer: Acts 3:1* "Now Peter and John went up

together into the temple **at the hour of prayer**, being the ninth hour."

2. Pray fervently and earnestly: **James 5:16-18** "*The effectual **fervent** (heartfelt) **prayer** of a righteous man availeth much. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and **he prayed earnestly** that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*"

3. Pray specifically: **Mat 16:19** "*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*"

4. Pray in unison, agreeing together: (Acts 4:24, 31; Matt. 18:19-20).

5. Pray consistently: Luke 18:1-8

6. Pray boldly: **Heb. 4:16** "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"

7. Pray expectantly: **1 John 5:14-15** "*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*"

B. Learn this lesson well: **Words and works that count** are **born in prayer**, **brought forth in prayer**, and **established in (by) prayer**

"Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted."
- Albert Einstein

C. David, a man after God's own heart believed in the power of prayer, and practiced it.

Psa. 5:3 "*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*"

Psa. 63:1 "*A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. " O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"*

Psa. 88:13 "*But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent (to anticipate, hasten to meet (usually for help) thee.*"

1. When we practice what David did, when it comes to prayer and pray-ing, then we will see the power and results of prayer at work in our lives that he did.

2. Isn't it time that you made a commitment to "*seek first the kingdom of God*" in prayer? What better time to come and make that commitment than now?

Kevin 9/15/12

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