**Prayer For The Saints**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday January 17th, 2021

Text: Philippians 1:9-11

#### Intro

1. We pray for one another and ask for prayers for ourselves and for our loved ones.
   1. We are told in *James 5:16* that the effective prayer of the righteous can accomplish much.
   2. We are to pray for all men – I Timothy 2:1
   3. We are to pray for all the saints – Ephesians 6:18
   4. We pray for physical needs – Matthew 6:11
   5. We pray for the sick and the suffering – James 5:13-16
   6. We pray for physical safety – Acts 12:5, 12
   7. We pray for all those in authority – I Timothy 2:1-4
   8. We pray for forgiveness of sin for ourselves & one another – Matthew 6:12; Acts 8:22-24
2. How does it make you feel when you get a letter, email, or text from a dear brother/sister telling you they are thinking of you and that you are in their prayers?
   1. It makes us feel loved, appreciated, that we are not alone in our struggles, etc…
3. Imagine getting a letter from the apostle Paul saying he was praying for you!
   1. Paul is in Rome, miles away from the brethren at Philippi (approx. 800 miles away!)
   2. Paul is imprisoned in Rome for the cause of Christ and it is well known by the Praetorian Guard and everyone else – Philippians 1:12-14
   3. **Philippians 1:9-11:** Paul prayed for the saints at Philippi that they would abound in love, knowledge, and discernment so that they would lead productive lives for God.
4. Not just a message saying, “I’m praying for you,” and not just a message for their physical condition but specific things for their spiritual condition before God!
5. Paul set an example of praying for the saints!

**I. Abounding Love (Philippians 1:9)**

1. Paul said they were on his mind, in his heart, and in his payers (Philippians 1:3-8) – He prayed for them to…
   1. Have abounding & discerning love (Phil. 1:9).
   2. To abound in love, knowledge, and discernment is to grow in the gospel *(Heb. 5:14: discernment is for the mature)*
2. Paul wants the Philippians to have an abounding love: Love produces obedience.
   1. *Jn. 14:15; I Jn. 5:3:* Love for God causes one to obey God. If we love Him we keep His commands.
      1. *I Peter 3:10-13:* One who would “love life and see good days” must obey God.
   2. *I Cor. 13:1-3:* Love is the motive that causes men to serve God in an acceptable manner.
   3. *I Pet. 1:22-23:* God wants His children to love one another with a “pure heart fervently.”
   4. *Jn. 13:34-35:*We must love one another as Christ loved us; a selfless sacrificial love.
3. This abounding (overflowing) love must be tempered with:
   1. Knowledge – The word here means “full knowledge.”
      1. Biblical love is not something that just happens!
      2. *Phil. 1:9:* It is an emotion that must be guided by knowledge.
      3. *Eph. 5:17:* God wants people to understand His will. It ***CAN*** beunderstood!
      4. *Prov. 1:7:* “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”
   2. Discernment (judgment)
      1. *Heb. 5:12-14:* The ability to discern right and wrong is a mark of maturity.
      2. *Ps. 119:104, 113*: “From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Samekh. I hate those who are double-minded, But I love Your law.” Note the contrast between “love” and “hate.”
      3. Understanding of God’s word shows us the contrast and we can hate sin.
4. To abound in love is to abound in knowledge of God’s word and obedience to God!

**II. Approve Excellent Things (Philippians 1:10)**

1. Approve excellent things (Philippians 1:10): To approve excellent things is to discern properly and choose what is good! “Make good decisions!” *(Foys taught us that!)*
2. “Approve” in the Greek *(Gr. dokimazo G1381)* is a strong word.
   1. “To test, analyze, prove.” It is used to describe the analysis of metals (smelting).
   2. A smelter tests the metals through fire – the impurities burn away leaving a refined, pure metal.
3. “Excellent” *(Gr. diaphero G1308)* signifies that which is “distinct, unmixed…pure.”
4. God’s people must discern between right and wrong, good and evil (like testing of metals), and hold fast to the good – *I Thess. 5:21* (keeping that which is pure).
   1. How can one do this without a standard, an objective, or a criterion?
   2. Love for God’s word provides the basis for analyzing choices one must make in life.
      1. *II Thess. 2:10-12:* Love for truth will protect one against apostasy. Note: those who perish are those who “did not receive the love of the truth.”
      2. *II Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17:* God’s Word is the standard of measure.
      3. *Phil. 4:8:* Whatever is excellent we are to dwell on these things (Not a suggestion!).
5. Some people are so spiritually immature that they cannot distinguish good from evil!
   1. *Is. 5:20:* In the days of Isaiah there was a serious confusion about right and wrong.
   2. What about today? Are there those who struggle with this today? Our society and culture are rife with this backwardness.
   3. *Titus 1:16:* Our works show what is in our hearts: good or bad.
   4. *Heb. 5:12-14:* This ability is a mark of spiritual maturity and exposes those who are spiritually immature.
6. To approve excellent things is to discern properly and choose what is good!

**III. Be Sincere and Blameless (Philippians 1:10)**

1. “Be sincere and blameless” (Philippians 1:10): God wants people who are genuine; whose religion is not a mere external show, people who are above reproach in a dark world (Phil. 2:15)
2. Serving God must be done from the right motive *(Mt. 6:1).*
   1. *II Cor. 9:7:* Giving must be done from the heart.
   2. *Col. 3:16, Eph 5:19:* Singing must be accompanied by the heart.
   3. *I Cor. 11:24-28:* The Lord’s Supper must be eaten in the right way (an examined heart).
3. God wants people who are genuine; whose religion is not a mere external show, not fake.
   1. *Mt. 15:8-9:* Jesus compared religious leaders of His days with the people of Isaiah’s: they went through the motions but their hearts were corrupt! ***Hypocrites!***
4. Paul wants the saints to be “blameless” *(Phil. 1:10).*
   1. *Phil. 2:14-15:* He wants them to be “blameless and innocent, above reproach.”
   2. This is possible although they live in an evil age among sinful people.
      1. *Dan. 1:8:* Daniel did not conform to the people’s practices. He made up his mind that he would not defile himself even if all his brethren did.
      2. *Phil. 4:22:* There were “saints in Caesar’s household.”
      3. *I Pet. 2:12:* We are to keep our “behavior excellent among the Gentiles” so they may glorify God (*Mt. 5:16*).
5. It is possible to keep ourselves “unstained” by the world around us! *(Christians were doing it in the 1st century and we can do it now)*

**IV. Filled With Fruit (Philippians 1:11)**

1. “Filled with fruit” (Philippians 1:11): Jesus said the branches on His vine must bear fruit *(John 15)!*
   1. Spiritually minded lives will bear much fruit *(Gal. 5:22-23)!*
   2. Not a physical standard but a spiritual standard of the heart.
2. This is the product of “abounding in love, approving excellent things, and being blameless!”
   1. *Jn. 15:1-8:* Jesus emphasized the importance of fruit bearing *(Gal. 5:22-23).*
   2. *Rom. 7:4:* Paul said that those “married to Christ” are to be fruit bearers!
      1. *Rom. 6:20-21:* The Roman saints, prior to obedience to Christ, had produced, with their lives, “fruit” of which they were ashamed.
      2. *Rom. 6:22:* As saints they produced holy fruit that would lead to everlasting life.
3. “Fruits of righteousness” are fruits of right doing; righteousness as decreed by God!
   1. *Eph. 2:10:* We are created in Christ unto good works!
   2. *II Tim. 3:16-17:* The scriptures furnish us unto every good work.
4. The Fruit of Righteousness is the product of godly conduct!

**Conclusion**

* + - 1. Christians need to strive for these ideals because their lives shall be judged “in the day of Christ!” (Philippians 1:10)
      2. Do we pray for one another that we each will achieve these goals?
         1. As Paul prayed for the Philippian saints, so we should pray for one another!
      3. Paul set the example in praying for the saints and asking for prayers of the saints!
         1. Paul wanted brethren to pray for him as he prayed for them.

**Ephesians 6:18-20:** Paul stated that we need to pray for all the saints, and he even asked for the prayers of the Ephesians on his behalf: “…pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Paul asked for prayers that he may speak the gospel with boldness!

**Colossians 4:2-4:** Here, Paul says to pray with alertness and thanksgiving, and then asked the saints at Colosse to pray for him: “…praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

Again, the focus isn’t the physical but that opportunity for teaching the gospel will arise and that when it does, Paul and those with him will know how to speak and make it clear!

* + - 1. When we pray for others let us not only think of their struggles and physical needs, but their spiritual needs and their growth in God’s word!
      2. If not a Christian, you need to be! Repent and be baptized and start a new life in Christ!
      3. If a Christian with unrepented sin, your soul is in jeopardy! Repent and seek forgiveness!
      4. Whatever your requests, let them be made known NOW while we stand & sing!