

The Prayers of A Sold Out Man The Apostle Paul

Overview:

Last week we talked about Paul.

We opened at the end of his life where he is writing his second letter to Timothy. This one from his prison cell as he awaited execution. He writes....

2 Timothy 4:6-8

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.** ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,

I asked what could make a man pen those words with such confidence?

We said two words. A SOLD OUT life!

And we went on to look at the marks of a Sold Out Life.

This week I want to stay with Paul – kind of like part II and look at the **Prayers of a Sold Out Life!**

I find it interesting that while Paul is in this prison knowing that at any moment they will come to behead him, he is not focused on himself.

Anyone of us would be praying...
God give me strength
God if there's any way...rescue me
God help me

Instead we find Paul not praying for himself, but thinking of what he can write to encourage someone else.

The scripture gives us the view that Paul took Timothy under his wing of mentoring like a son.

And having that close a relationship he knows that his death will probably be a trauma to Timothy.

He know how the enemy would love to see Timothy quit.

Look at how he precedes the verses we read above.

2 Timothy 4 verse 1

¹When Christ Jesus comes as king, he will be the judge of everyone, whether they are living or dead. So with God and Christ as witnesses, I command you ²to preach God's message. Do it willingly, even if it isn't the popular thing to do. You must correct people and point out their sins. But also cheer them up, and when you instruct them, always be patient. ³The time is coming when people won't listen to good teaching. Instead, they will look for teachers who will please them by telling them only what they are itching to hear. ⁴They will turn from the truth and eagerly listen to senseless stories. ⁵But you must stay calm and be willing to suffer. You must work hard to tell the good news and to do your job well.

He's saying...

- Look I know its gonna be hard but you can't quit.
- Keep preaching even if its not popular. (NKJ- Be ready in season *and* out of season.)
- Correct people and tell them about sin
- BUT also cheer them up!
- Be an encourager!
- When you correct them be patient.
- When they go looking for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear don't worry.
- Stay calm even if it means you will suffer for it. (NKJ- But you be watchful [alert] in ALL things. Endure afflictions)
- You MUST work hard (be sold out) and tell the good news and do your job well!

All through the epistles of Paul, you find him praying for others and exhorting them to give their all and not give up.

So lets look at some of the things he prayed for others and see if maybe we can learn something from them when we pray for others.

Although Paul did not know the people he was writing to, he began his comments to them by saying that he was praying for them.

And I ask myself, Am I willing to do this? Can I learn something from Paul's example here? Am I willing to tell people that I am praying for them?

Lets look at his prayers to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵ 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,

Paul is praying that God would give them wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God!

Wisdom: The ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight.

Revelation: [Theology] A manifestation of divine will or truth.

- He is praying that they will be able to judge what is right and true.
- And that God would show them the divine truth.

¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;

- He prays that they would see with spiritual eyes not physical eyes.
- This from the man who was made physically blind when he first encountered Christ.
- In those days Paul was blind I believe he probably saw more with his spirit than he ever saw in the natural.

What does he want them to see with spiritual eyes?

that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

- I want you to know that in Christ is HOPE!
- I want you to know that in Christ you have an inheritance.

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.

- I want you to know if you believe he has exceeding great power for us.
- The same power that raised him from the dead and set him in heavenly places.

²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- I want you to understand that all things are under His feet. He has conquered everything!
- He is head over everything in the church.

Eph. 3:14-19

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ^[a] ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

- He prays that our spiritual man would be strengthened with God's Spirit.

¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;

- That we wouldn't just know about Christ, but that we would know him in our hearts.
- When we talk about the heart of a person, we talk about the center of their being.
- Paul prays we would have an intimate relationship with Jesus.
- He would dwell in the very center of our being.

that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
(CEV) Stand firm and be deeply rooted in his love.

- That you stand firm in God's love.
- You put down roots into it.
- A tree with deep roots is unmovable.
- Paul wants our roots to be so deep in God's love that NOTHING can shake us loose.

What is the first thing that causes us to doubt in a situation?

- We begin to question God's love for us.
- We begin to question whether he really cares about what we are going through
- Is He really still here?
- Has He abandoned me?

Romans 8:35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

Then he goes on to clarify what he wants us to learn about this love...

¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—

Comprehend: to understand the nature or meaning of; to take in or embrace;

He was convinced that if we could fully comprehend God's love, we would be sold out.

How wide is it?

Psalm 103 says "As far as the east is from the west!"

What's its length?

It's the Alpha and the Omega- the beginning and the end and everything in between.

How high is it?

That Christ would stand up from the throne in heaven, lay down his robe and step down to walk among us.

In Eph. 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

How deep is it?

David said,

Psalm 40:2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

- Paul knew what deep meant when he and Silas got arrested in Philippi.

Acts 16:22

²²The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. ²³After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the *inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.*

- This was the deepest part of the prison.
- They were bleeding, in pain, in the dark and in chains.
- When you know the depth of God's love you have a different response than others do.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

- The power of God could reach the inner prison cell!

²⁹The jailer called for lights [it was dark]

- Into the pitch dark of your pit, the love of God can reach you!

¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;

- this is the kind of love that passes human understanding

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- His ultimate prayer was that we might be FILLED with the FULLNESS of God.

Philippians 1:9-11 (CEV)

⁹I pray that your love will keep on growing and that you will fully know and understand ¹⁰how to make the right choices. Then you will still be pure and innocent when Christ returns. And until that day, ¹¹Jesus Christ will keep you busy doing good deeds that bring glory and praise to God.

- His prayer is that our love keeps growing. It doesn't get stagnant.
- He prays they make the right choices.
- He says then you will be pure and innocent when Jesus returns.

Colossians 1:9-12

⁹ 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.

2 Thessalonians 1:11,12

¹¹ 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.