

How Vital is Prayer to Fulfilling Your Ministry Before the Lord?

Ricardo Campos, Teaching Elder Grace Chapel, Orange, CA April 11, 2010

Review:

Col. 1:1–14, Paul and Timothy thank God for the Colossians' fruitful walk. Thus, they pray that God will grant them further understanding of His will so that their walk will reach new heights as they thank God for delivering them from the power of darkness.

Col. 1:15–29, Christ, the Creator and sustainer of the entire universe, reconciled believers to God through His death in order to one day see them stand holy before Him as His Body. However, they must stay grounded in Him so that they will indeed bring glory to His Body.

Col. 2:1–10, Paul wants the Colossians to remain rooted in Christ and not be captivated by the world's empty philosophy because everything they need they already have in Christ, the Possessor of all wisdom and knowledge.

Col. 2:11–23, believers have been permanently united with Christ, the God of the universe. That is, they've been stripped of the world's body of sins and placed into the Body of Christ, which freed them from the world's dogma that once enslaved them. In light of this, they should not go back and submit to man's futile philosophy (the world's dogma), which appears promising, but is of "no value."

Col. 3:1–11, since we have been so thoroughly stripped of the Old Man (the world's body of sins) and have been clothed with the New Man (Christ's Body, the Church), we should think Christ's thoughts after Him and put away the Old Man's deeds (sins) because the New Man (where the only thing that matters is our unity in Christ) grows according to God's thinking not the world's.

Col. 3:12–17, since we are now clothed with Christ's Body instead of the world's body of sin, we must dress appropriately. That is, we must be clothed with the utmost care and concern for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, which includes continual forgiveness as we seek the Body's unity with a constant heart of thanksgiving.

Col. 3:18–4:1, though we all have a responsibility to treat one another with love and respect in Christ's Body, certain members have specific responsibilities toward one another: husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves (by application employers and employees). Though these responsibilities seem to leave us vulnerable to abuse by those over us, God is careful to ask both parties to respect and care for one another because both are part of Christ's Body and accountable to Him.

I. Introduction

Prayer is our lifeline to God; it comforts, refreshes, and reorients our minds to God and His will. And as long as we draw breath on this earth, we need it no matter how great a believer we might be. Paul, chosen apostle to the Gentles, asked for prayer and urged the Colossians to walk wisely before the unbeliever so they too would have opportunity to preach the mystery of Christ.

II. Prayer is the Lifeblood of the Believer. Whether You're a Fruitful Church or an Apostle You Need Prayer (Col. 4:2–4)

Paul urges the Colossians to devote themselves fiercely to prayer, which will keep them vigilant in their ministry before the Lord. Then he, the apostle chosen by God for the Gentiles, asked for prayer: that God would grant him opportunity to preach the mystery of Christ and that God would give him the ability to communicate that message. If Paul needed prayer, do we?

But if God knows the end from the beginning, why do we need to pray? First, we're commanded to pray, Matt. 6:9; Col 4:2. Second, this is God's ministry, He directs our steps, Acts 13:2. When we attempt to go out on our own, we are without God's guidance, Acts 16:6–7.

Does prayer actually work? Yes, Num. 11:1–2; 21:4–9; Matt. 21:22; Acts 12:1–16.

Doesn't God already know what we need? Yes, He does, Matt. 6:8. But notice that even the Son of God prayed, Matt. 14:22–23; 26:36–44. Why did He pray, especially at Gethsemane? Because prayer was His lifeline to His Father. The fellowship He had with His Father at the beginning (Jn. 1:1) was not the same now that He was temporarily separated from Him as a man. The Cross was also looming and He needed strength to bear it, Lk. 22:39–44. If He needed prayer, do you?

However, when you pray do not doubt God, Matt. 21:22; Jam. 1:6.

Prayer is not for God's benefit, but ours. It's our lifeline, our line of communication with our heavenly Father, a line that keeps us alert and in tune with Him and His will.

III. Paul Urges the Colossians to Behave Wisely before the Unbeliever so that They Too will Have Opportunity to Proclaim the Mystery of Christ (Col. 4:5–6)

Paul wanted the same for the Colossians that He asked of God (opportunity and ability to communicate the mystery of Christ). Thus, he urges them to be wise about how they behave towards unbelievers so that they will redeem every opportunity God brings their way. Their behavior is to be attractive, like a well-seasoned meal, so that they'll know how they ought to answer every unbeliever.

IV. CONCLUSION

Prayer is for our benefit not God's. It is vital to our ministry before Him. It should be that which strengthens and sustains us and that which reminds us who He is, who we are, and what His will is for our lives. Thus, at every turn we must pray. And as we reach out to the unbeliever, we must behave graciously in order to attract him to God.