

Content

This morning we are closing out our study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul started out his letter with an extended prayer, praising God for the riches of His blessings in Christ. And now Paul is ending his letter by encouraging the Ephesians in their prayer life, both as the means of appropriating God's resources of the armor of God, which, as we have seen is another way of saying to put on Christ. And then Paul encourages them to pray for him as he is in prison and is requesting prayer for gospel boldness. In this sermon we will look at our prayer lives from two angles. First, we will explore the pattern of prayer. The word we will use to describe this is comprehensive. We will explore why we struggle with prayer, and God's power available to us in prayer through the Holy Spirit. Our second point is the purpose of prayer. Paul's focus, even while in prison is to seek prayer for gospel boldness, to have the proper words to declare the mystery of the gospel.

Gospel Connections

Paul tells the Ephesians to pray at all times in the Spirit. And what is the focus of the Holy Spirit? The gospel of Jesus Christ. John 16:14 says "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." The Spirit's main job is to glorify Christ by helping us remember the gospel. And in Luke 11:13 Jesus reminds His disciples, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" We need to have more of a gospel mindset when it comes to prayer, looking at it more as how we appropriate God's power into our lives and live out our union with Him.

Application and Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically
 - a. What insights did you learn?
 - b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don't understand?
 - c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to change as a result of this passage of Scripture?

2. In what area of your life is it hardest for you to trust God through prayer? How can you overcome this lack of trust?

3. Paul said to pray at all times “in the Spirit” (v.18). What does it mean to pray “in the Spirit”? **Hint: read John 16:14.** How can praying “in the Spirit” help you to pray more relationally and less mechanically?