

As we continue our study of Living out Loud we see the remarkable prayer Paul offered to God on behalf of Christians.

Paul begins with posture of prayer Text: For this cause I bow my knees...

Note: Is there a correct posture of prayer? YES! But it has nothing to do w/ body position and everything to do w/ heart condition.

In fact, in the Bible there are several different postures for prayer. David sat before the Lord in prayer. Abraham stood. Ezra bowed down and prostrated himself. The point is simple - the only correct posture for prayer is that you humble yourself before the Lord and trust in Him w/ all your heart. (see Ps. 51)

Paul then lays the foundation for his prayer in acknowledging God as Father/Creator ... 'from whom his whole family ... derives its name.' The Life Application Bible notes say of these verses,

"The family of God includes all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in the present, and all who will believe in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father. He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything ...

We are a family, and just like any other family we will have shared joys and shared tears ... feelings get hurt, and relationships get healed. Bonded together by our adoption by God, we have been forged into a new family – a family that prays for one another.

Paul prays a prayer for the church family, both then and now.

Prayer Phase #1 – God's power would be renewed within us.

Martin Luther is famous for commenting, "I have so much to do today that I'm going to need to spend three hours in prayer in order to be able to get it

all done." **We must learn to see prayer as the most powerful and efficient use of your time.**

To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.—*Martin Luther*

Paul highlights God's mighty strength, which carries the idea of fortifying a stronghold. Maybe some members of the Ephesian church who have just become spiritually worn out ... they are ready to give up. The strengthening is further intensified by the addition of the words '*with power According to the riches of his glory*'. This indicates that his giving flows freely from an inexhaustible supply of riches of that glory.

The strengthening is to take place (where) is in 'the inner person'. It is the focal point at the center of a person's life where the Spirit does his strengthening and renewing work. 'In your hearts', in verse 17, is equivalent to 'your inner being'. Baptism, Lords supper / Word

Indeed, our inner selves stand in constant need of renewal given our continual struggle with sin and the need for daily spiritual revival. Rather than merely chasing after our physical needs and desires, we must attend to our interior lives. **Our souls requires as much care and exercise as our physical bodies.**

Paul echoes himself when he says to Timothy, "*Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises reward in both this life and the next*" (1Tim 4:7b-8).

This signifies a permanent indwelling ... that Christ has moved in and settled down, rather than come by for some short-term visit. Release Relent and Surrender to Jesus to be Lord of your Life.

Rather than a small Jesus tucked away somewhere in our souls, the text assumes the presence of one who gives shape and strength at the core of our being, who takes up residence in and redefines us.

Prayer Phase #2 – God’s love would be realized among us.

This petition is essentially a request to grasp the vast expanse of Christ’s love. The four dimensions, ‘width, length, height, and depth’, they establish the incomprehensible limitlessness of God’s love. Our inability to comprehend God’s love on our own is the reason that Paul calls once again for God’s power. His almighty power is needed for us to realize its dimensions; so he prays for power to enable us to understand how immense it is.

Our comprehension of this cannot be simply a mental exercise. Clearly, it is a personal knowledge, and although it undoubtedly includes insight into the significance of God’s love in the plan of redemption, it cannot be reduced simply to intellectual reflection. We live it by faith.

God’s love without limits is something shared with other believers, hence the phrase ‘*together with all the saints*’. Love can only be love in the midst of relationships. It’s when we move past talking about the mission of Living to Love People to action of God’s love in our lives to others. Then we really begin to understand that love.

Prayer Phase #3 – God’s character would be recreated in us.

Paul’s prayer reaches its climax in this final phrase of verse 19. His prayer is that God’s character would be recreated in us.

The phrase ‘of God’ refers to God in all his perfection, including his presence, life, and power.

In the booklet, “My Heart Christ’s Home”, the author tells the story of Jesus moving into a man’s home. At first, Jesus was treated as a guest, only entertained and given access to the formal dining room and living room.

But as Jesus stayed on, he was gradually allowed admission into other areas of his home. When Jesus was escorted into each room of the house where he was confronted with the illicit and the immoral that had made themselves at home.

Gradually, Jesus moved throughout the house clearing out the vestiges of a sick soul ... scrubbing down the sin soaked corners of every room. The climax of the story is reached when Jesus smells the stench of something dead in the hallway closet. The closet is locked ... safely secured. Jesus approaches the person and tells him of the horrendous odor that is wafting from the closet. But the owner does not want to give up access to the closet. “I have given you access to every other room in the house. I have allowed you to move in and rearrange, and redesign every other place. I want to keep this closet for myself. I want to have this one place that is mine.”

Jesus’ reply needs to be heard. “Unless you give me access to the closet, I cannot live here. Being a Christian means surrendering all of the sin our lives, all gradually being transformed in the remarkable likeness of Christ.

Conclusion

Christ did that on the cross and by grace we live forgiven and strengthened. Since God Christ himself, is the standard, then this means being perfect as he is perfect, being holy as he is holy

To be permeated by Christ is to be stamped by his character, to be clothed with him, to live in such a way that you show you are God's child. The
thought that we can believe in Christ without being like him is absurd.

He is praying that they may 'be all that God want us to be', that is spiritually mature.

May we follow Paul's example and intercede with the Father that we might be strengthened by his power in order to know and experience Christ's love then live in that love until we reach full spiritual maturity =
When do we have full maturity in Christ? In heaven