

## Pray For An Open Door

Text : Col. 4: 2-4

( Read : Col. 4: 2-6 -&- Acts 16: 4-10 )

### INTRODUCTION :

#### A. Prayer is one of the foremost indicator of one's faith.

1. Christians pray because they know God is in control.
2. Prayer acknowledges that conviction.

#### B. However, one who does not truly believe wastes his time praying.

1. **Read ... James 1: 5-8**
2. **Matt. 21:21-22** And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen. **22** And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

#### C. Prayer is fundamental to the Christian life.

1. **I Thess. 5: 16-18** Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
2. **Luke 18: 1-** Now He ( Jesus ) was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, ...

#### D. The scriptures give us clear guidelines for prayer.

1. God wants us to entrust Him with our fears, our worries, and our burdens.  
**I Pet. 5: 6-7** Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, **7** casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.
2. God is open and receptive to the requests of His children.  
**Phil. 4: 6-** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
3. However, we may not seek to use prayer as and ATM card.
  - a. **James 4: 3-4** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. **4** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
  - b. The Christian has a different value system than the world. The world concentrates on the Physical, but Christians have their minds on the spiritual.
  - c. Christians have changed masters. ( **No one can serve two.** **Luke 16: 13-14** )

**With this lesson we will observe some guidelines for Christian prayer.**

**Read ... Col. 4: 2-4**

## **I. Christians are to be devoted to prayer.**

- A. Vs. 2- Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it ...**
- B. Prayer is much more than an emergency flare. ( *God, I'm in trouble, help me.* )**
  - 1. Remember Jonah. ( *God heard him from the depths of the sea.* )
  - 2. God certainly expects for us to look to him in times of crisis, but not just then.
- C. Prayer is to be a part of every Christians manner of life.**
  - 1. Remember Daniel ( **Dan. 6** ) ... His enemies knew prayer was part of his lifestyle.
  - 2. Likewise, prayer should be a part of every Christians daily routine.
- D. Communication is the key to relationship building.**
  - 1. The closer the relationship the more time people spend together.
  - 2. As our love for God increases we spend increasing amounts of time with Him.
    - a. Communication is two way.
    - b. As we pray to God, we also spend time in His word receiving His message.

## **II. Notice that worship is the primary emphasis of prayer.**

- A. . Vs. 2- ... keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;**
  - 1. Listen to the prayers we pray; ... what is the primary attitude ?
  - 2. Do we ask more often than we thank and praise God. ( *Lord bless ..., be with ...* )
  - 3. We must pray FOR some things, but what is the general tenor of our prayers?
- B. The giving of thanks to God is a form of worship.**
  - 1. **Heb. 13:15-** Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.
    - a. The giving of thanks is praise.
    - b. Praise is a spiritual sacrifice, i.e., worship.
  - 2. One who is a devotee of God will praise Him. ( **They cannot be constrained.** )

### III. Christian prayer includes petitions that God's will prevails in all things.

#### A. When Jesus was in the garden there was a clash of wills.

1. Jesus did not want to suffer what He was about to suffer, but He prayed for God's will to be done.
2. **Luke 22: 42-** *Jesus ... began to pray saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."*

#### B. It is the will of God that ALL people be saved. ( *Pray for salvation of ....* )

1. **II Pet. 3: 9-** *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*
2. **I Tim. 2: 3-4** *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

#### C. God's desire for ALL people to be saved is so strong He sent Jesus to offer Himself to die in their stead.

1. **John 3: 16-** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, ...*
2. **Mark 10: 45-** *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. ( **I Tim. 2: 5-6** )*

#### D. While Jesus is in Heaven interceding to keep saved people saved, He has assigned ALL those who are already saved to carry to ALL the lost the message of redemption through faith in Him.

1. **Mark 16: 15-16** -cf- **Matthew 28: 18-20**
2. **II Cor. 5: 14-19**
3. **I Pet. 2: 9** ( *If we want His will to be done, we will be reaching out to the lost.* )

#### E. THEREFORE , God ( *through Paul* ) instructs us to include requests for assistance with our assignment as a part of our prayers.

**Vs. 3-** *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;*

#### F. We are instructed to pray that we will fulfill our responsibility.

1. **Vs. 4-** *that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.*
  - a. "ought" indicates a responsibility. "clear" = open & unashamed
  - b. It is not just Paul who has that responsibility, but ALL who have been reconciled. ( **D** )

2. Paul has every reason to be intimidated.
  - a. He was in prison for proclaiming Christ.
  - b. Continuing to preach Jesus could cause Paul to be executed.
3. We face no danger, only social pressure; what can we loose ?
  - a. We may loose some relationship.
  - b. At worst, some have lost Jobs for sharing Jesus in the workplace.
  - c. **Rom. 8:18-** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

#### IV. God is the keeper of the keys to ALL doors.

##### A. God can and He often does close doors.

1. **Acts 16: 6-7** They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;
  - a. Everyone who obeys God will knock on some closed doors. ( cf – *sales people* )
  - b. Because a door is closed today does not mean it will be closed forever.
2. Thus, a closed door does not mean one should give up or stop knocking.
  - a. When faced with a closed door, Paul kept on going.
  - b. Even God can't direct a stationary object.

**ILL.-** What happens when you turn the wheel of a parked car ?  
Does it turn around ? **NO !** It has to move before it can turn.

##### B. God will open doors if we keep asking and keep turning doorknobs.

1. **Acts 16: 8-9** and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. **9** A vision standing appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." *God will not needlessly hinder the gospel.*
2. **II Cor. 2: 12-14** Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, **13** I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia. **14** But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.
3. We don't wait for an angel to direct us.
  - a. Like, Paul, we must keep moving until a door is opened.

- b. How do we find out which door is open ?

*We try the knob on every door until we find which one is not locked.*

**C. God has a will for **YOUR** life which includes shining forth the gospel to the lost.**

1. Don't wait on a miraculous event ... trust God and keep serving.
2. Pray for open doors and rejoice when you find one.
3. Accept God's decision when you encounter a locked door, **but keep trying knobs.**

**ILL. - Alexander Graham Bell** once said :

**“When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us. ”**

- a. God will close the wrong door at the right time.
- b. *God alone knows the master plan.*

**D. Opposition does not indicate that the door is closed.**

1. **I Cor. 16:8-9** But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; **9** for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.
2. Satan will oppose the word of God and the one who proclaims it.
  - a. Jesus
  - b. Apostles
  - c. Paul ... **YOU**

**E. God may send you through a door with only one person on the other side.**

1. **Acts 8** ... Philip was called away from the crowds to one man in the desert.
2. **Acts 10** ... Peter journeyed to a house with one family.
3. **Acts 16** ... Paul preached to a small group of women and baptized one.

**\* Sowing one seed can produce an abundance for generations to come.**

**CONCLUSION :**

**A. It is God's will that we go forth with hearts of compassion.**

1. Jesus looked on the city and wept over it being lost. ... **Luke 19: 41-44**
2. Paul would trade his soul for those of his countrymen. ... **Rom. 9: 3**

**\*\* The frequency and intensity of our prayers for the salvation of others is one of the most accurate measures of our gratitude for our own salvation.**

**B. Our text has shown us that God instructs us to pray for doors to be opened for the gospel to be clearly set forth.**

**C. God opens doors as a reward for faithfulness.**

**Rev. 3:7-8** And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: **8** 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

1. Like the church in Philadelphia we have “**little power.**”
2. Like the church in Philadelphia we must also be confessing His name to the lost.

**D. Salvation is a shared experience.**

1. The same heart that leads one to seek salvation for himself will also lead one to seek salvation for others.
2. The greatest joy you will every experience is leading someone to Christ.
3. **Challenge :**
  - a. Pray daily for opportunities to share the gospel.
  - b. Try every door to see if the answer to your prayers is behind it.

**\* Every prayer this year include a prayer for an open door.**

**INVITATION :**