

Contra Mundum

Praying Biblically

Ephesians 1:15-23

February 8, 2015

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.
-Ephesians 1:22-23

I. FAITH & LOVE - TWO SIGNS OF NEW LIFE

- True faith in Christ leads to a love for Christ and his people (Acts 2:42; Rom. 10:9; Gal. 6:10; 1 Tim. 4:10).
- Faith minus love = no faith (1 Cor. 13:1-4; James 2:14-19; 1 John 4:7-11).

II. PRAYER THAT PREVAILS

- The church in Ephesus is suffering, persecution is real, jobs for Christians are scarce, and yet Paul's prayer for them is:
 - Thank God for them
 - Wisdom and revelation to know a glorious God
 - Enlightenment to comprehend what they already have
 - God's power which is available to them
 - An understanding of the glory of Christ
- Jesus taught us how to pray; the apostles show us how to pray (Luke 11:1-4; Acts 4:23-30; Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-14; 2 Thess. 1:11-12; Philemon 1:6; James 5:13-18; 3 John 1:2).

III. ALL IN ALL

- Prayer is effective because God is powerful, because Jesus is Lord over all, and because the Spirit has granted us everything we need (vss. 19-23; Eph. 1:3).

KNOW: Prayer is powerful...or it can be. Paul's prayer is a model for us, to pray not so much for "stuff," but for the power of God in our lives and the lives of others. His is a prayer for knowledge and insight into the inscrutable work of God in our lives.

DO: Pray with power and effectiveness.

Suggested Reading:

The Valley of Vision, Edited by Arthur Bennett

Praying God's Word, by Beth Moore

Praying with Paul, by D.A. Carson

Praying the Lord's Prayer, by J.I. Packer

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Ephesians 1:15-23

1. As you read over our passage for Sunday again, what strikes you most immediately about Paul's prayer for the church?
2. We talked a bit about faith and love in the Christian life? Why are they so important as a combination?
3. "How can prayer change a God who has already ordained all that will take place?" This is a common complaint about prayer. How do you think the apostles would have answered this question?
4. Why does Paul want the church to "know" so much about God? How does that help us in our Christian walk?
5. Read 3 John 1:2. Prayer can be very high and lofty. What else can prayer be at other times?
6. Read Matthew 16:18 and then Ephesians 1:19-23. Do you see any parallels here? Why is the church triumphant?
7. How might your own prayer life change as a result of what you know/have learned about prayer?