



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

## Study 10: THE PRAYER OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THEIR PASTORS 2 Thessalonians 3:1,2

Prayer was the lifeline of the life and ministry of Paul the Apostle. Nobody knew the impotence of man's talent, knowledge, skill and cultural strength without God's enablement as he did. The source of his spiritual strength and success was prayer, faith and total dependence on God. His Christian life began in prayer and seeking God's face (Acts 9:9-12). His life was transformed by grace, obtained through prayer and constant trust in God. His ministry was supported and saturated with unceasing prayer. He prayed in the house (Acts 9:11); he prayed in the church (Acts 13:1-3); he prayed in the prison (Acts 16:25); he prayed on the shore (Acts 21:5; 20:36-38); he prayed in the temple (Acts 22:17). He prayed for the sick (Acts 28:8); he prayed for the church, praying night and day, without ceasing (Romans 1:9; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 1:15-17; Philippians 1:8-11; Colossians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 3:9,10; 2 Timothy 1:3,4).

The greatest Apostle that ever lived was sustained by the power of prayer and faith in the Lord. Having prayed so much for the church and knowing so much of more opportunities to reach others with the saving gospel of the Lord, he now requested for the support of the church in prayer. "**For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries**" (1 Corinthians 16:9). "**For all men have not faith.**" So, "**pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men**" (2 Thessalonians 3:1,2).

### PAUL'S DEMAND FOR THE MEMBERS' PREVAILING PRAYER

2 Thessalonians 3:1a; Romans 15:30-32; Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; Philemon 1:21,22; Hebrews 13:18,19; 2 Corinthians 1:9-11; Philippians 1:19-26; Acts 12:5-24.

The great Apostle and his companions requested for the prayer of the brethren. The brethren can contribute much to the success of the ministry and the impact of the preaching of the gospel by praying. Thus, both the preachers and the brethren can share the responsibility of ministry. Knowing the power of the believers' prayer of faith, the Apostle humbly asked for their prayers. It was a great privilege for the brethren, too, to pray for him.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, once asked three of His disciples to pray with Him in His hour of great sorrow, seeking strength to face the cross for the salvation of the whole world. The church gathered together to pray for the Apostle Peter when he faced Herod's threat of execution, and God delivered him miraculously. God sent miraculous deliverance from heaven and the expectation of his Jewish persecutors was disappointed. Indeed, "**The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man** (and of righteous brethren, and of a righteous church) **availeth much**" (James 5:16).

"**Brethren, pray for us.**" Paul's request for believers' intercession was not only to the Thessalonian church; he also made the same request to the churches at Rome, Ephesus, Colosse and others. He had no confidence in the flesh; his hope of success in ministry and victory in trials and persecutions was not in his own strength or natural gifts. He was conscious of the intercession of Christ and the Holy Spirit for him. He himself was a praying Apostle; yet, he expressed a great need for the prevailing prayer of the church.

### PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR HIS MESSAGE'S PENETRATING POWER

2 Thessalonians 3:1b; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2:1,13; Nehemiah 8:8,9; Jonah 3:3-10; Acts 2:37-42; 6:7; 17:1-4,11,12; Acts 14:1-3,7,21-23,27; 15:3.

Paul's calling was clear from the very beginning. He was "**a chosen vessel**" unto Christ to preach the gospel to "**the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel**" (Acts 9:15). He was "**to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God**" (Acts 26:18), "**that they might be saved**" (Romans 10:1), and be "**sanctified by faith**" (Acts 26:18).

To accomplish all these, he needed the effectual fervent prayer of the saints. He received the saving gospel of Christ from the Lord Himself (Galatians 1:11,12). He preached the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8), and

proclaimed nothing but sound, incorruptible doctrine (2 Corinthians 2:17); yet, he felt and knew the need for the prayers of the brethren.

The preaching of the true gospel needs the irresistible power of prayer to make it effective. Proclaiming the soul-saving, life-transforming, powerful Word of God faithfully and forcefully still requires the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to convict, conquer and convert the hearts of men. The careful presentation of the Word, human wisdom in communication, zealous and passionate preaching with the best of fervour and desirable intentions are not enough to lead and keep souls in the kingdom without our praying to secure divine penetrating power for the Word.

Preaching and prayer must go together if we hope to reap an enduring harvest of souls into the everlasting kingdom. Our preaching must be birthed, blessed and baptized in prayer if we expect a revival of righteousness in the church and repentance in the world.

## **PROMISED DELIVERANCE FROM MORALLY PERVERSE PERSECUTORS**

2 Thessalonians 3:2; Acts 26:16-18; Romans 15:30,31; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10; 2 Timothy 3:10-14; 4:14-18; Jeremiah 1:17-19; 15:20,21; Acts 12:5-11; 2 Peter 2:9.

***“And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.”*** Paul’s persecutors were relentless and unreasonable. His adversaries were wicked and devilish; yet he laboured so much more than any other Apostle, more than all the Apostles. Satan buffeted him, principalities and powers wrestled with him, the Jews conspired to kill him, Gentiles stoned him, false brethren slandered him, sinners and unbelievers imprisoned him, the seas roared and raged against him, associates and churches forsook and disappointed him; yet, he preached and spread the gospel throughout the then known world. The Lord delivered him from ***“unreasonable and wicked men”*** through his and others’ prevailing prayers. He was strengthened in the inner man so much that ***“none of these things”*** moved him. Through it all and despite the dangers that confronted him daily (1 Corinthians 15:30-32), he ***“fought a good fight”*** and ***“kept the faith”*** until he ***“finished his course”*** (2 Timothy 4:6,7). Believing the God who cannot fail, the faithful God who answers the prayer of His righteous people, he declared, ***“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom”*** (2 Timothy 4:18).

All who preach the unchanging gospel of the unchangeable God should express the same unwavering faith in Him who cannot fail. ***“God...who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us”*** (2 Corinthians 1:9,10).

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