

“THE LEADER’S REFRESHING”

Text: Romans 15:30-32

Subject: How Paul’s Prayer Request Ministers To Every Leader

“Now I beseech you brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. (v. 30)

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea, and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints. (v. 31)

That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” (v. 32)

Introduction

1. Paul (in his travels) makes an incredible request of the believers in Rome.
2. He asks for united prayer for himself (that God would do five things in answer to prayer).
3. This is no “take it or leave it” request, but a heartfelt plea of support:

“I beseech you brethren...that you **‘strive together’** in prayer for me.” (v. 30)

- ◆ The words “**strive together**” come from the Greek word (sunagonidzomai) which means:
 1. To agonize together with
 2. To struggle through
 3. To battle as in a contest
 4. To contend with an enemy

In Other Words

- ◆ Paul needed others to stand with him in battle!
- ◆ Paul knew that greater victories are won in united prayer!
- ◆ Paul never reached the place of not needing others to pray for him.

Question: So what exactly does Paul ask prayer for?

Question: Why does God record it in Scripture for us?

Question: What refreshes the leaders (in trusting God to answer prayer today like He did for believers who prayed for Paul?)

Five Expectations In Prayer For Leaders

I. God Provides Protection Through Prayer!

“That I may **be delivered** from them that do not believe in Judea” (Romans 15:31A)

- ◆ The word “delivered” is the Greek word (ruomai) which means:
 1. To be rescued
 2. To be delivered
 3. To be pulled from danger

Question: Why did Paul ask for this protection?

1. Paul had previously escaped one plot on his life in Rome (Acts 9:29-30)
2. Omens of yet another plot awaited him (Acts 20:22-25; 21:10-11)
3. Paul will risk his life for the equality of Gentiles and Jews alike.
4. Paul knows the possibility of losing his life at the hands of the Jews who were opposed to the messiahship of Jesus.

5. Paul knows that he is walking into a den of lions.

Question: So why does Paul ask for prayers of protection?

Answer: Because the enemy (satan) works primarily through people to stop the progress of leaders and the work of God!

- ◆ It's people who resent and resist authority and leadership.
- ◆ It's people who stir up trouble and bring division.
- ◆ It's people who intimidate and manipulate, create problems and set traps.
- ◆ It's people who attempt to distract, disrupt, detour and discourage spiritual leaders.

So Let's Pray...

...that God will deliver (and protect) us from every enemy snare that seeks to destroy!

II. God Provides Reception Through Prayer!

"And that my service which I have for Jerusalem may **be accepted** of the saints." (v. 31B)

Question: What does Paul ask for here?

Answer: That his ministry be accepted (or well-received) by those he ministers to.

- ◆ The word for "service" (diakonia) means: ministry
- ◆ The word "accepted" (euprosdektos) means: pleasing, accepted and well received.

In Other Words

- ◆ Paul knew that his mission of mercy might not be well-received by the saints in Jerusalem.
- ◆ Paul knew how evil reports abounded because he was receiving Gentiles into the church and was now bringing money as a gift from these Gentiles (Acts 21:21).
- ◆ Paul had been criticized (slandered) and knew what to expect when heading to Rome.

And God Teaches Every Leader To...

1. Pray that our ministry is warmly received.
2. Pray that our motives are easily discerned.
3. Pray that our efforts are crowned with God's favor.
4. Pray that our counseling, training, decisions, visitation, teaching, hospital visits, worship leading, vision casting and intentional planning – "be accepted" by those who are on the receiving end of our leadership!

III. God Provides Joy Through Prayer!

"That I may come unto you with joy." (v. 32A)

- ◆ The word for "joy" (chara) means three things:
 - 1) Joy
 - 2) Gladness
 - 3) To rejoice

Question: What does Paul want prayer for?

Answer: He asks (for believers to pray) that he be characterized with the fragrance of joy in all of his service.

In Other Words

- ◆ In the midst of every challenge, hardship, church faction, broken friendship, and temptation to be wounded – Paul sees the need to maintain his attitude of joy!

Question: What is Paul revealing to us here? (It's pretty clear)

1. What happens in you is more important than what happens to you.
2. A bad attitude makes a person a prisoner of their own experience!
3. Attitudes are contagious – is mine worth catching?
4. Leaders that are joyless can seldom lead others to higher ground.
5. I am responsible before God to cultivate a spirit of joy that is birthed and maintained in a spirit of humility, gratitude and obedience.

What A Discovery Here:

- ◆ That continual prayer will put something in you that is greater than anything that is around you!

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Neh. 8:10)

IV. God Provides Direction Through Prayer!

...“By the will of God.” (v. 32B)

- ◆ The word “will” is the Greek word (thelema) which means:
1) Design 2) Purpose 3) Plan 4) Will

Question: Why did Paul ask prayer for this?

Answer: Because Paul wanted to always be in the center of God's will for his life!

Paul is asking prayer...

1. To have wisdom to make right decisions!
2. To be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading!
3. To discern the will of God for himself!
4. To know the voice of God in his innermost being!

Question: Is it possible to know the will of God for your own life? (Paul said...)

- ◆ **“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”**
(Ephesians 5:17)

Question: Is it possible to discern the voice of God for yourself? (Jesus said...)

- ◆ **“My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow Me.”** (John 10:27)

Some Key Factors In Determining God's Will

1. **Circumstances.** As you take note of providential circumstances surrounding you – admitting it when what God is doing in you differs from what God is doing in the church.
Romans 8:28

2. **Compulsion**. When you sense the Holy Spirit speaking and leading you in a specific direction. Acts 13:2
3. **Common Sense**. To the truth that God is all wise and wants to match your gifting to the need of the assignment. Acts 15:37-38.
4. **Counsel**. Since there is no foolish question, it is wisdom to seek the counsel of spiritual leaders that God has placed in your life. Proverbs 15:22
5. **Contentment**. Paul makes it clear that if peace in your heart is absent, step back because the result of making right choices will be the peace of God. Colossians 3:15

And Remember:

- ◆ If you feel **led**, it's probably God. If you feel **pressured**, it's probably not!

And Memorize:

“We pray for you and desire that you will be filled with **the knowledge of His will**.
(Colossians 1:9)

Some Key Factors In Determining The Voice Of God

1. It is a **familiar** voice! (No need to look for the weird and wacky)
2. It is a **personal** voice! (God can speak directly to you)
3. It is an **inner** voice! (Of impression)
4. It is in **accord** with the **Word** of God! (God will not contradict Himself)
5. It carries a sense of **importance**. (For things that really matter)
6. It is a **recurring** voice (No need to be afraid of missing it)
7. It is associated to the voice of love and **peace**! (God does not author strife and confusion)

And Remember

- ◆ In Pentecost we have a flare for the dramatic, sensational and flamboyant.

And Remember

- ◆ It doesn't have to be nonsense to be spiritual, weird to be anointed or flashy to be **God!**

And Remember

- ◆ No one can exalt themselves and **Christ** at the same time, and to the extent that man is seen – God isn't!

V. God Provides Refreshment Through Prayer!

“...And may with you be refreshed.” (v. 32C)

- ◆ The word “refreshed” is the Greek word (sunanapauomai) which means:
 - 1) To soothe
 - 2) To Calm
 - 3) To be refreshed

Question: What's the revelation behind this request?

Answer: That everyone needs to be refreshed from time to time (in the ministry of the Lord)

Question: What's so beautiful about this request?

Answer: That Paul is humble enough to tell his Roman readers that , “**I need to be refreshed in the journey.**”

In Other Words

- ◆ No one ever gets to the pinnacle of spirituality – where they do not need new and fresh and up-to-date encounters with our living Lord!
- ◆ No one ever reaches a height of maturity – where they do not need refreshing seasons with the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ No one ever climbs so high in heavenly places that they do not need spiritual out-pourings as a soldier of the Lord!

It's No Secret To Anyone That...

- ◆ You can't fill up the car on New Year's Day and make it last for the next 364 days!
- ◆ You can't drink 8 glasses of water today and wait 30 days before you drink again!
- ◆ You can't eat a meal at the Old Country Buffet and expect that meal to sustain you the rest of the year!
- ◆ You can't use a flashlight 24/7 and think that the batteries will never need replacing.

(In Plain Vanilla)

- ◆ You can't give out more than you take in without damage to the inner core of your spirituality!

(Our Inner Core Is Strengthened By)

1. Solitude (getting alone with the Lord)
2. Silence (getting quiet and away from noisy distractions)
3. Sabbath (getting away to rest and enjoy recreation or “down time”)

Conclusion

From Paul's prayer, it's obvious that God wants you to enjoy the journey!

1. The Lord wants to protect you from those with impure motives!
2. The Lord wants your ministry to be well received by those under your leadership!
3. The Lord wants His joy to be the fragrance flowing from your heart.
4. The Lord wants to direct you in His will for your life.
5. The Lord wants to renew and refresh your spirit for the long haul in the ministry!

Amen!
Bill Kirk

“Pray that I may come to you **with joy**, in the **will of God**, and may with you **be refreshed.**” (v. 32)

This is God's will for you!