

Praying with Paul - Ephesians 1



Ephesians 1 ¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way

Ephesians 3

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

As we start 2019, I imagine most of us enter the year with hopes and fears. We may be excited about a significant family event, a special birthday or a holiday that is already planned, but we may be anxious about an illness, a financial pressure, a broken relationship or even Brexit! As a church, we start the year thinking about prayer because whatever 2019 holds, we go into it with God who is loving and faithful.

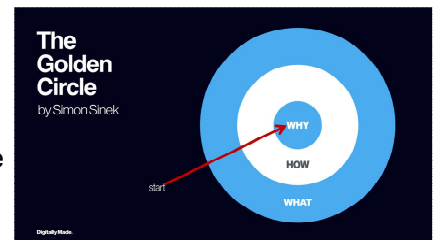
Prayer is a privilege rather than a duty or obligation. Through prayer we can encounter God and find his grace and power.

This month we will be looking at the prayers of different people in the Bible. Tonight we are looking at Paul. Paul was clearly a great man of prayer and encouraged, in his letters, those in his Churches to follow his example. Paul helpfully often tells his readers what he is praying for them. Let's see how these prayers challenge and inspire us.

Praying with....

1. your Passion

In Paul's prayers his passion for the Gospel comes across. Having zealously followed God through obeying the Law, he encountered Jesus on the Road to Damascus. He then had a similar zeal for Jesus and the cross that brings us into the fulness of all that God intended for humanity. He had a burning passion to see the Good News go to the non-Jewish world. He had a clear idea of *what* he was doing and *how* he was going to do it, but also *why* he was doing it. *Why* God had called him. His prayer reflects this *why*.



As we start 2019 do you have a passion for God's Kingdom? Do you know why God has given you the personality, gifts, job, family and relationships that you have?

As church we have a *what* - continually reproducing the life of Jesus. We have a *how* - every member matters - everyone a witness, everyone a minister, everyone cares for the poor (Find, love, follow, serve).

But we also have a *why* - seeing the city of Bristol transformed by the power of Jesus. With a vision this big, we need to pray. Paul knew he needed to pray too, if the Gospel was to have an impact in his day.

2. God's Purpose

How do you pray according to God's purposes (will)? You need to know how God thinks and what his priorities are. You can discover these by reading and studying the Bible.

Paul knew that God wants to:

1. Strengthen people
2. Fill people with his Spirit
3. Strengthen and establish people in love
4. Know the love of God and Jesus
5. Be filled with the fulness of God

So he prays these things!! Ephesians 3v16-19

3. other People

Paul is never without a team around him. Prayer with others is a great way to pray. Why not form a regular prayer triplet with a couple of friends or come long to Prayer Watch (see website).