

Remnant Life Church
Sunday, January 20, 2013

Prayer – Pure Communication I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Paul's letter to Thessalonica:

- A major port city of 200,000 southwest of Philippi; the capitol of Macedonia where Paul established a church during his second missionary journey
- Large Jewish population that persecuted Paul and forced him to leave before his work with the new church was completed
- Paul sent Timothy back to the church to encourage, teach and determine how they were doing
- The book of I Thessalonians is a response to Timothy's report back to Paul

What is prayer?

- A time for crying out to God
- A time for asking (petitions)
- A time of intercession for others
- A time of Thanksgiving
- A time of fellowship

Many people do not feel they know how to pray or are uncomfortable when a time calls for prayer

- Prayer is speaking to and with God
- Prayer is communication in its purest form not just involving our words but our hearts

Paul's formula in these three short verses can be a source of revelation, comfort and strength for us every day.

Part 1: Be Joyful Always

- Joy is from within; happiness from without
 - 235 times of joy, joyful, joyous in the Word
 - 30 times happy or happiness
- My joy is in the knowledge of God's unwavering love for me

- **John 15:11** - *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete*
- Satan does not care about your happiness
 - Why do you think so many people who are obviously not in God are happy (by the world's standards) and successful?
 - BUT why are so many of those same people in actuality so miserable?
 - Prince Alfred of Edinburgh
 - Vincent Van Gough
 - Ernest Hemingway
 - Freddie Prinze
 - Junior Seau
 - All of these "successful" people took their own lives
- As Christians we should be sensitive to those around us using discernment not just what we observe
 - Many times people are not what they seem to be
 - Judas
 - Peter
 - **Prov. 28:11** - *A rich man may be wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.*

Part 2: Pray continuously

- In all that could and has been said of prayer we will focus on only one point – the priority of prayer in our lives
 - In all that Jesus had to do in His brief time on earth He always made time for prayer (after the feeding of the 5000; many times after healing people; recharge)
 - It was a necessary part of His ministry
- We live today in a pace of life that exhausts our time
 - We squeeze as much as we can into the few hours that we are awake
 - Fearful of being called lazy; fearful someone else will get ahead of us; fearful that we won't get or hold onto what we have
 - R.A. Torrey – (pastor, evangelist, educator, mid-1800 to early 1900) "How little time the average Christian spends in prayer! We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little . . . The power of God is lacking in our lives and in our work. We have not because we ask not." (James 4:2)
 - When Paul writes of praying continuously he is calling each of us to be ready to pray at all times, in all circumstances.

- Too many times we pray after we have exhausted our resources and turn to God as a last resort
- If we will go to Him first then He will guide us in what we need to do
 - David regularly prayed before going into battle
 - Jesus' time of prayer was for strength and direction from His Father
 - **John 5:19** - *Jesus said "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*
 - Satan wants nothing more than to try and prevent us from spending time in prayer because he knows, even more than many Christians, the power of persistent prayer.
 - Praying without ceasing means we pray about EVERYTHING in our lives
 - Prayer should be like breathing to a Christian – we don't stop what we are doing to breath, we do continually while we do other things – so too with prayer.

Part 3 – Give Thanks

- The 19th century preacher Charles Spurgeon said of these verses:
 - *"When joy and prayer are married their first born child is gratitude."*
 - Thankfulness MUST follow rejoicing and prayer – it ministers to the depth of our souls
 - Giving thanks takes the focus off of ourselves and points our attention to God
- The opposite of giving thanks and rejoicing is complaining and grumbling
 - This is completely contrary to what the Word teaches us
 - Paul did not say in **Phil. 4:4** "Grumble and complain in the Lord always and again I say grumble and complain."
- Prayer gives the soul a vent to allow the worry and concern of the world to be removed.
- Prayer brings us into close fellowship with our Creator, the One who knows us best and wants the best for us.
- Prayer will bring the very core of our beings into an alignment with God that will feed, strengthen, encourage and empower us to live life victoriously.
- **Romans 8:35-39** - *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are*

considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Spend this week in prayer asking God is this is to be your church home.