

The Work and Glory of Prayer

****There are different types of prayer. Tonight we will focus on prayer for our brethren, families and friends. If you have questions let me know and we can talk about the prayers of worship and personal petition at another time.

I hope that this will be more of an encouragement/exhortation than a teaching.

Work/Glory don't seem to be words that we generally think of using together but the Bible does and so we are going to **connect some dots** to help us see it.

Works/Deeds

*Genesis 2 we are told that God rested from His **works**.

*In John 17:4 Jesus said He had finished the **work** that God had given Him to do. *****Now remember that Jesus is the Great High Priest, and His whole life's work was/is one great intercession for us. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He also called us a royal priesthood. 1st Peter 2:9

*In Romans 8:26-27 we are told that one of the Holy Spirit's **works is one** that goes on now is intercession for us. This is because we don't know what to pray for and we don't know how to pray as we should. God searches our hearts and sees what is in the mind of the Spirit as He (the Spirit) makes intercession for us, and for those we pray for AND He always intercedes according to the will of the Father (Ephesians 1:11).

*But what are OUR works?

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them.

The new testament is full of references to the good works we are called to do: Go and baptize, love your neighbor, feed hungry brethren, look out for widows and orphans, etc., build the Church and Kingdom, pursue hospitality, share, walk and speak in love and use our gifts for the benefit of all to name a few.

Romans 12 gives us the outline of how we are to live in this world. In this chapter Paul lists many things that qualify as these good deeds/works. And in verse 12 he tells us to be **fervent** in spirit and to **continue steadfastly in prayer**. **Be the Priests He said we are...in the sense that WE continue to intercede for others.**

This fervent prayer is one of the good works we are called to BECAUSE WE ARE IN CHRIST.

Fervent implies heat. ! You know how you feel when you are excited in a good way, or angry or any emotion that affects our heart...that's heat. We have to have love, Christ's love sometimes, to supply the heat we need. We have to love one another sincerely and prayer on behalf of others is a great way to show that we do indeed love one another. What does our song say....He that loveth not...?

Steadfast means to attend to it continually...the hard work of prayer...Daniel 10:12-13, This Present Darkness.

So if prayer is one of the good works predestined for us to do...does that mean that from eternity past it was meant for me to pray for those in my sphere of life? That my prayers have somehow been woven into the fabric of my life in Christ and the answers to those prayers woven into His plan for others? Are they not just something I can choose to do or not without any consequence to myself or others?

The Word says to pray without ceasing...WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE???

GLORY- Reference: **Them He Glorified by Bernard Ramm.**

***The Hebrew word for glory is **KABOD** (kahvode) and in part means to give someone all the esteem of a job well done...to esteem something as having worth: “heaviness, weight, splendor, and gravity, along with merit and excellence.” It is God's revelation of Himself plus all the splendor, show and pomp of His court and surroundings. Think of it like this - A King returns from going out to conquer a country or adversary, when he returns he fills up his palace and his court with all the spoils of said conquest. Around the perimeter of the room are all the gold and jewels, beautiful women, the outside stables are full of the horses and cattle and slaves and all of these things are the evidence that he is victorious...they are the glory of his victory. They “say” to everyone **I am the King**. They are the proof of his works! His bravery and deeds exhibit his kabod. Our redeemed lives are part of His glory.

DOXA is the **Greek** word for glory and includes the idea of the opinion one has for another because of his works. Think in terms of fame. But it came to take on the meaning also of KABOD. And together they also evolved to express the Shekinah glory of God. Also, if a man has the right opinion and understanding of God this means he should be able to form a correct view of God's attributes (all powerful, all knowing, ever-present, merciful, faithful to His children, holy and just and so on) to understand all His perfections. Since all things flow out of His perfections they reflect His glory (i.e. His works). The Word says that the heavens declare His glory (**Psalm19**) and that the whole Earth is filled with His glory (**Isaiah 6:3**)....His glory is the works and the result that comes from them, that flow out from who He is.

Jesus is the glory of God. **Hebrews 1:3** says: The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being. In a manner of speaking Jesus is the fulfillment of all the works/will of salvation that He was sent to do. They saw His glory in miracles, in His transfiguration and ascension.

Jesus speaks of this glory when He prays: “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” **John 17:4-5**

This verse says 4 things about glory...but for us today we are going to focus on the 2nd one, which is the answer to **how Jesus glorified God on earth**. He did it by finishing the work that was given Him to do. The final, complete, perfect vindication which is described as honor or Kabod. It was glorious because it was once for all, a totally complete work. What a great work was that!

In **John 17:20-24** Jesus says that **we are going to share in the glory that He has with the Father.**
How is that, what does that look like?

*****SO TELL ME AFTER LISTENING TO THIS PORTION OF THE INFORMATION HOW DO YOU SUPPOSE WE WILL GET THIS GLORY? I am not trying to be sarcastic...I just mean really, have you ever thought about it? I hadn't.**

*****We are created for glory:** John 17:22, Romans 8:18 & 9:23, 2nd Corinthians 4:17, Colossians 3:4, 1st Thessalonians 2:12, 2nd Thessalonians 2:14, Hebrews 2:10, 1st Peter 5:1-4,10.

In 2nd Cor. 3:18...it tells us that we are even now being changed from one degree of glory to another and this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is the process and part of that process is teaching us to be like our Brother in all things. All the things listed that we are to exhibit are things Jesus did, including praying almost constantly.

2nd Peter 1:3-4: **3**His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us ^{to} his own glory and excellence, ^d **4**by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, **so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. We will not be little gods, but we are being made into Christ's perfect, godly humanity.

*****The questions now should be (1) What is my part to play? (2) How will I share in this glory of the Father and the Son? (3) Does prayer have anything to do with it?**

Is our prayer life fervent and steadfast?

Let's be honest....prayer is hard. Prayer is not something that normally leaves us feeling like we have really arrived. We fear we don't know what to pray or how to pray and what words will find favor with our God. We may have read books about different ways to pray, or things to pray for but to enter into the Throne Room in confidence and talk with our Father seems like WORK!! Some people imagine climbing up onto the lap of a father figure to make it more normal and cozy feeling. Others say they feel stiff and like they need to sound like a KJV Bible to talk with God.

*******KEY: 1st Corinthians 3** tells us that we, anyone working in the and for the Kingdom, are "fellow-workers" with God!! Literally it means "**A companion in labor.**" Did you know that? We are all exactly that! We are the hands and feet of Christ in the earth...going about doing the good things He directs us to do (extending His good works) for the building up of the Kingdom.

1st Corinthians 3:5-9, 2nd Corinthians 6:1

IN OTHER WORDS WE ARE CALLED/COMMANDED/INVITED TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST!!! A CONDUIT OF SORTS, TO LET THE RIVER OF LIVING WATERS FLOW OUT FROM US...BOTH IN WORD/DEED AND IN PRAYER! NOT ONLY AS AMBASSADORS BUT AS PRAYER WARRIORS..being companions with God in His work. Think of it – God uses our prayers as a part of His plan and will.

Think of the beautiful prayers that Paul prayed for the new believers and the comments he made that he was confident that through their prayers he would be released to be with them again. (Philemon 1:22 Philippians 1:19). He said that he was helped by the prayers of the saints (2nd Corinthians 1:11, 1st Peter 4:7). He said that they were devoted to prayer, that prayer ascends to God as a memorial to God. Paul asked that people would strive with him in prayer. In Revelation prayer and incense are spoken of three times together...both ascending to God as a pleasing thing to Him.

HOW WE SEE PRAYER CHANGES EVERYTHING.

We Must Pray because we have a job description and a command and a calling. We are integral to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world. We are needed! **The mystery of prayer is that somehow, for reasons only God understands and knows, He has made us part of how He decided, in the beginning, to accomplish the fulfillment of His work in us, the Body, on earth.** Do you see that? Do you understand how this all lines up??

Jesus says He wants to share His glory with us. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all have had their works and WE ARE IN CHRIST doing the works that were planned for us before the world began, which is to continue the work of Jesus. We will be intercessors (remember the royal Priesthood) through obedience to the call to prayer and the Holy Spirit will come along side, together with us against all resistance and complete the work God has started (because every good work has it's

origination in God). He will do the groaning and sorting out of our words and clean up our motives and purge ourselves out of our prayers and offer them up to the Father as He searches through our hearts.

Romans 8:25-27

2nd Chronicles 16:9 says..**9**For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is *blameless* toward him. *Perfect toward Him – Friendly, complete and perfectly at peace.

*****What are the hindrances to this kind of thinking about prayer?**

1. Matthew 25:24 - “Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, I give you back what you gave.”

Many people secretly think of God as a hard master, and virtually throw on Him the blame of their fruitlessness. And being fearful of making matters worse by meddling, they do nothing.

2. Hebrews 11:6 (You can but will You?) “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

3. We don't think that He is really involved, or that He is mad all the time. God is never in an adversarial role with His children. Do you remember when Dave Walker was here and he said about prayer that when God invites us to come the obvious is that He wants us to bring our requests so that He can answer them. **Hebrews 4:14-16.** Pour out your heart before Him Ps. 62:8 and many more...Ps.141:2 Our prayers are like sweet smelling incense to God...**it is faith in action.**

4. Does God move on something when I pray...am I getting through to Him? Instant results, microwave society, and my understanding of timing and process. Can I change God's mind?? All these questions...We must stop looking for what He may or may not do...and concentrate on **what we are to do. We can't understand because His ways are higher.**

*****It isn't that we don't have faith.** We surely know that “nothing is too difficult for God.” It's our hope that we have a hard time holding on to. And yet continued prayer indicates that hope is indeed present. The Charismatics say that people don't have enough faith...but that is usually not true. It's that they have been taught incorrectly and therefore when their hope wanes they stop praying thinking either God doesn't care or won't answer or the worse that they did not have enough faith.

GOD IS NEVER IN AN ADVERSARIAL ROLE WITH HIS PEOPLE

We have to leave the completion to God and do the work He calls us to do.
Rest in His sovereignty! Rest in His wisdom!

*****What happens when I don't pray when I should?**

God will do His work through willing hearts but we will lose those crowns to throw at His feet and not have the joy of knowing that we actually participated in the work of the Spirit in our brother and sisters lives. It is part of the glory He wants to share with us. This is a **joyful calling a wonderful opportunity** to “help.” Don't we always say in our hearts that we wish we could help in some way. Yet **we think of prayer as being the least we can do when it is actually the best/most we can do!**

Because God must do what we can't but we must do what He has shared and allowed us to do.

Are you catching the vision for this high calling? Do you understand that in Heaven on the day that we are glorified we will be shown to be in Christ, a part of a royal priesthood, chosen to participate in Christ's work...fellow-workers with Him and our prayers will be part of our "glory" (work) that we bring to Him and the glory He shares with us.

****We use this phrase in theology- **MEANS OF GRACE**. What does that mean? It means a way, or a circumstance, or person that God uses to give grace to His people. The three most common means taught are communion, the preached Word, and baptism. These do not include every means by which God may build us up but are the channels He has ordained for this purpose and are communicated to Christians supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. But we can be a means of grace in the sense that when we pray for one another God has chosen to work through our prayers.

God is sovereign over the means of grace. The means of grace are those things God uses to dispense His favor. When we pray we are used by God to bring goodness/grace/favor/help and healing into the lives of His children.

We bless ourselves when we humble ourselves and ask for God, our Father, to bless our brethren.

Let us join together and "work" to bring God's blessings to one another and in turn to enter into His glory in Heaven.

Follow-up Questions for class....