



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Vol. 29 Issue 540

Nov. 07, 2012

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The Afters](#)

[Ocean Wide-The Afters](#)

[Keeping Me Alive-
The Afters](#)

[We Are-Kari Jobe](#)

Prayer

Lord, I thank You for allowing me to be a participant in the Gospel by sowing my finances every month into ministries that are touching the world. Help me to always be aware of the great impact my gifts have and to never let the devil make me think that what I do is unimportant. My gifts and prayers help "put gas in the tanks" of these ministries so they can take the Gospel forward. I want to give faithfully to these works, Lord. Therefore, I ask You to increase me financially so I can give even more. I want to partner with them to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to help fill Heaven with the souls of those for whom Jesus died, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 NOW THE Philistines gathered their armies for battle and were assembled at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim. 2 Saul and the men of Israel were encamped in the Valley of Elah and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. 3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on one side and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. 4 And a champion went out of the camp of the Philistines named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span [almost ten feet]. 5 And he had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of mail, and the coat weighed 5,000 shekels of bronze. 6 He had bronze shin armor on his legs and a bronze javelin across his shoulders. 7 And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam; his spear's head weighed 600 shekels of iron. And a shield bearer went before him. 8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. 10 And the Philistine said, I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. 11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. 12 David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah named Jesse, who had eight sons. [Jesse] in the days of Saul was old, advanced in years. 13 [His] three eldest sons had followed Saul into battle. Their names were Eliab the firstborn; next, Abinadab; and third, Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, 15 But David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. 16 The Philistine came out morning and evening, presenting himself for forty days. 17 And Jesse said to David his son, Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves and carry them quickly to your brothers at the camp. 18 Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See how your brothers fare and bring some token from them. 19 Now Saul and the brothers and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20 So David rose up early next morning, left the sheep with a keeper, took the provisions, and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host going forth to the battleground shouted the battle cry. 21 And Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army. 22 David left his packages in the care of the baggage keeper and ran into the ranks and came and greeted his brothers. 23 As they talked, behold, Goliath, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, came forth from the Philistine ranks and spoke the same words as before, and David heard him. 24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, terrified. 25 And the Israelites said, Have you seen this man who has come out? Surely he has come out to defy Israel; and the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free [from taxes and service] in Israel. 26 And David said to the men standing by him, What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? 27 And the [men] told him, Thus shall it be done for the man who kills him. 28 Now Eliab his eldest brother heard what he said to the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David and he said, Why did you come here? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and evilness of heart; for you came down that you might see the battle. 29 And David said, What have I done now? Was it not a harmless question? 30 And David turned away from Eliab to another and he asked the same question, and again the men gave him the same answer. 31 When David's words were heard, they were repeated to Saul, and he sent for him. 32 David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine; your servant will go out and fight with him. 33 And Saul said to David, You are not able to go to fight against this Philistine. You are only an adolescent, and he has been a warrior from his youth. 34 And David said to Saul, Your servant kept his father's sheep. And when there came a lion or again a bear and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and smote it and delivered the lamb out of its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard and smote it and killed it. 36 Your servant killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God! 37 David said, The Lord Who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and the Lord be with you! 38 Then Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. 39 And David girded his sword over his armor. Then he tried to go, but could not, for he was not used to it. And David said to Saul, I cannot go with these, for I am not used to them. And David took them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his shepherd's [lunch] bag [a whole kid's skin slung from his shoulder], in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near the Philistine. 41 The Philistine came on and drew near to David, the man who bore the shield going before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked around and saw David, he scorned and despised him, for he was but an adolescent, with a healthy reddish color and a fair face. 43 And the Philistine said to David, Am I a dog, that you should come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. 45 Then said David to the Philistine, You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the ranks of Israel, Whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will smite you and cut off your head. And I will give the corpses of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands. 48 When the Philistine came forward to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand into his bag and took out a stone and slung it, and it struck the Philistine, sinking into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck down the Philistine and slew him. But no sword was in David's hand. 51 So he ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their mighty champion was dead, they fled. 52 And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron. So the wounded Philistines fell along the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. 53 The Israelites returned from their pursuit of the Philistines and plundered their tents. 54 David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent. 55 When Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As your soul lives, O king, I cannot tell. 56 And the king said, Inquire whose son the stripling is. 57 When David returned from killing Goliath the Philistine, Abner brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 And Saul said to him, Whose son are you, young man? And David answered, I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem.

Shall we turn in our Bibles to the seventeenth chapter of first Samuel? In the seventeenth chapter of first Samuel, we read where,

The Philistines had gathered their armies together [against the children of Israel, Of course] king Saul had gathered his armies together, [They were setting their battle lines. They were digging their foxholes and setting up their battle array on either side of the Elah Valley] (1Sa 17:1-2).

Now the Elah Valley is an area that is south and west of Jerusalem, maybe fifteen miles. A beautiful little valley but of course anything can be made ugly by war.

And so on the mountain on the one side was the camp of the Philistines, on the mountain on the other side was the camp of Israel (1Sa 17:3):

In those days they would take their time in getting started into a real battle. They'd come and they'd yell and they'd have their shouts, and they'd try to psyche each other out. The children of Israel had been pretty well psyched out by this fellow Goliath, who came out every day for forty days.

The champion from the Philistines, he was from the city of Gath, he was nine feet six inches tall. He had a brass helmet, a brass coat of mail; that weighed [five hundred or] five thousand shekels. [Was it?] And he had these plates of brass on his legs, he had a brass chest protector. His spear was like a weaver's beam; [Huge spear and man, he'd come out there and stand and he was an awesome sight in the eyes of the children of Israel.] (1Sa 17:3-7).

And daily he would challenge them. He would say, "Look facing off here in battle. We can settle it easily. Send out a man to fight me, for I'm a Philistine, you're the Israelites, and if you've got a man in your army that's able to fight me, if he can defeat me, we'll be your servants. If I can beat him, then you'll be our servants." He was daily challenging them for forty days.

Meanwhile back in Bethlehem Jesse called his young son David in and said, [David, I want you to go out to the battlefield and check with your brothers and see how things are going.] Take these loaves of bread for them and this bushel of parched corn, and take these cheeses for their captains, and just find out how things are going, [and bring us news again of the condition of your brothers. And so David headed off on a chariot towards the battlefield in Elah Valley from Bethlehem, about twenty miles distance. And as he came near and he could see the camp of the Israelites, and the Philistines,] he got off the chariot, and ran to meet his brothers. [And of course he started sharing with them the parent's concern, How's everything going, and are you warm enough at night, is everything okay? As he was talking to them, this fellow Goliath came out and made his daily challenge.] So the fellows when they saw this man, they fled from him, and they were very afraid. And the men of Israel said to David, Have you seen this fellow that comes out every day? to defy Israel: the king said if any man can kill him, the king will make him very rich, he'll allow his family to become tax free in Israel, and he'll give his daughter for a wife. [And David said, The king will do what? They said, "Well, he's gonna give the guy a lot of riches, and his daughter to wife, and his family will be tax free."] (1Sa 17:17-25).

And so David's brother Eliab saw David's interest in this thing, and he said to David, "Who's watching over your sheep back there in the wilderness kid? You better get on home in a hurry. I know your heart, you're just—dad probably didn't send you down here. You're just down to see what a war looks like and you go home in a hurry." His big brother is trying to sort of protect him.

And David said, Hey wait a minute what have I done? There's a cause here? (1Sa 17:29)

This fellow is defying the armies of the living God, and if none of you fellows want to go out and fight him, I'll go out and fight him. So a fellow ran and told Saul the fact that they had a volunteer who had volunteered to go out and fight: David. And so they brought David in to fight Goliath. They brought David in unto Saul and Saul said, "Oh, you can't fight him son. That man is a man of war."

you're just a youth and he's been a man of war from his youth (1Sa 17:33).

You can't go out and fight him.

David said, [Wait a minute, don't reject me so fast. He said,] One day when I was watching my father's sheep, a lion and a bear came out and grabbed a sheep and began to drag them off. And I grabbed the sheep out of the lion's mouth: so he turned on me, and I took him by the beard, and I killed him. And I also killed the bear: and the God who delivered the lion and the bear into my hands will deliver also this uncircumcised Philistine. So Saul said, Well give you a try. Here take this helmet and this armour plate, [and so forth] and so they put this armour on David and the helmet, [And he's probably just a little kid and the helmet probably came down over his ears, and you know the armour plate's so heavy] He said, If you don't mind, I haven't tested this stuff. I don't think I better use this. I'll just go out as I am. And so David headed toward the giant (1Sa 17:34-40).

Now one interesting thing about the Elah Valley, there is a dry streambed in the bottom. Of course it's got water in it when it rained, but it's one of those typical Southern California type of rivers that only gets water when it rains.

But interestingly enough when God created the earth, I have in my office actually, some—and I should've brought some out tonight, but when God created the earth, knowing what was going to transpire in this particular valley, when God made this valley and this particular little stream bed, God just placed thousands of smooth round stones in this particular streambed. I've never seen any streambed with so many smooth, round stones. Beautiful stones for a sling. I've got a bunch of them in my office. I like to pick them up out of that stream, maybe because they're so perfect for a sling.

So David stopped by and he picked up five smooth round stones, [And there's just bundles of smooth round stones in this stream bed.] and he headed up the hill towards the giant. Put them in his little shepherd's sack, and headed up the hill. But when Goliath saw David coming he was outraged. He said, Am I a dog that you'd send a child out to fight me? And he began to curse David by his gods. He said, [All right kid you're asking for it,] I'll chop you up and feed you to the birds. And David said to the Giant, You come against me with a sword, and a spear, and a shield: but I come against you in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God that you have defied. And he's gonna deliver you into my hand; and I'm gonna chop up your whole army and feed it to the birds. [David was assured victory not only over the giant, but over the whole host of the Philistines.] And so David took one of the stones out of his little pouch, put it in his sling, and let it fly towards the giant, and he sunk the stone right into the forehead of the giant; and the giant fell down. And David went running up, [because he didn't even have a sword. All he had was a sling, he didn't even have a sword.] He pulled the sword out of the sheath of the giant, his own sword, and David used it and hacked off his head. [Then he grabbed it by the hair and held it up. Probably began to swing it around yelling.] And all the Philistines when they saw this, [their champion destroyed by a child, panic gripped them and] they began to flee (1Sa 17:41-51).

And of course the men of Israel, when they saw this, their hearts were encouraged, and they all came out of their tents and began charging after the Philistines. And there was a great slaughter of the Philistines that day. So the Lord delivered the Philistine there in the hands of David.

Now when Saul saw David go out against this fellow, he said to his captain Abner, Who is this young fellow? [Who is his dad?] And Abner said, [I don't know,] as thy soul live I can't tell you. And so the king says, Inquire and find out whose son he is. And so as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine still in his hand (1Sa 17:55-57).

It was a trophy that David had, and he wasn't gonna let the thing go. He was gonna carry it around for a few days. Must have been a big head too, you know, the guy's nine foot, six inches tall.

And he said, Whose son are you David? and David said, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite (1Sa 17:58).
(Through The Bible; C2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Commentaries; 1979 – 1986)

XV. PAUL AND HIS REQUESTS FOR PRAYER

"I desire above all things to learn to pray. We want to sound the reveille for the Christian warriors. We desire to find truth of the lack of real praying. What is it? Why is it? Why so little time spent in prayer when Christ, who had command of His time, chose to spend great part of it in INTERCESSION? 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' We believe the answer to be the desire is in the heart, but the will is undisciplined, the motive is present, but the affections have not melted under hours of heavenly meditation; the intellect is keen, yet not for hours of tireless research. The intellect and the affections have never been linked together by the sealing of the blessed Holy Ghost to do or die for God's glory in the secret places, with doors shut, lusts crucified."—Rev. Homer W. Hodge.

The many requests of Paul for prayer for himself, made to those to whom he ministered, put prayer to the front in Paul's estimate of its possibilities. Paul prayed much himself, and tried hard to arouse Christians to the imperative importance of the work of prayer. He so deeply felt the need of prayer that he was given to the habit of personal praying. Realizing this for himself, he pressed this invaluable duty upon others. Intercessory prayer, or prayer for others, occupied a high place in his estimate of prayer. It is no surprise, therefore, when we find him throwing himself upon the prayers of the churches to whom he wrote.

By all their devotion to Jesus Christ, by all their interest in the advance of God's kingdom on earth, by all the ardor of their personal attachment to Jesus, he charges them to pray much, to pray unceasingly, to pray at all times, to pray in all things, and to make praying a business of praying. And then realizing his own dependence upon prayer for his arduous duties, his sore trials and his heavy responsibilities, he urges those to whom he wrote to pray especially for him.

The chief of the Apostles needed prayer. He needed the prayers of others, for this he practically admitted in asking for their prayers. His call to the apostleship did not lift him above this need. He realized and acknowledged his dependence on prayer. He craved and prized the prayers of all good people. He was not ashamed to solicit prayers for himself nor to urge the brethren everywhere to pray for him.

In writing to the Hebrews, he bases his request for prayer on two reasons, his honesty and his anxiety to visit them. If he were insincere, he could lay no claim to their prayers. Praying for him, it would be a powerful agent in facilitating his visit to them. They would touch the secret place of the wind and the waves, and arrange all secondary agencies and make them minister to this end. Praying puts God in haste to do for us the things which we wish at His hands.

Paul's frequent request of his brethren was that they would "pray for him." We are to judge of the value of a thing by the frequency of asking for it, and by the special and urgent plea made for it. If that be true, then with Paul the prayers of the saints were among his greatest assets. By the urgency, iteration and reiteration of the request, "Pray for me," Paul showed conclusively the great value he put upon prayer as a means of grace. Paul had no need so pressing as the need of prayer. There were no values so appreciated and appreciable as the prayers of the faithful.

Paul put the great factor of prayer as the great factor in his work. The most powerful and far-reaching energy in Paul's estimate is prayer. He covets it and hoards it as he seeks the prayers of God's people. The earnestness of his soul goes out in these requests. Hear him in this entreaty for prayer he is writing to the Romans:

"I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers for me."

Prayers by others for Paul were valuable because they helped him. Great helpers are prayers. Nothing gives so much aid to us in our needs as real prayers. They supply needs and deliver from straits. Paul's faith, so he writes to the Corinthians, had been much tried, and he had been much helped and much strengthened by God's deliverance. "Ye also helping by prayer." What marvelous things has God done for His favored saints through the prayers of others! The saints can help the saints more by fervent praying than in any other way.

In the midst of envy and detraction, and in perils by false brethren, he writes thus to the Philippians:

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation though your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

"According to my expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death."

Shame was taken away, holy boldness secured, and life and death made glorious by the prayers of the saints at Philippi for Paul.

Paul had many mighty forces in his ministry. His remarkable conversion was a great force, a point of mighty projecting and propelling power, and yet he did not in his ministry secure its results by the force of his epochal conversion. His call to the apostleship was clear, luminous, and all-convincing, but he did not depend on that for the largest results in his ministry.

Paul's course was more clearly marked out and his career rendered more powerfully successful by prayer than by any other force.

Paul urges the Roman Christians to pray for him that he may be delivered from unbelieving men. Prayer is a defense and protection against the malignity and machinations of evil men. It can affect men because God can affect them. Paul had not only unbelieving enemies with whom to contend, but many Christians were prejudiced against him to an extent which rendered it questionable whether they would accept any Christian service at his hands. Especially was this the case at Jerusalem, and so prayer, powerful prayer, must be used to remove the mighty and pernicious force of prejudice, inflamed and deep-seated.

Prayer on their part for him must be used for his safety, and also that a prosperous journey and God's will might bring him speedily and surely to them, in order to bless and refresh mutually the Roman Christians.

These prayer requests of Paul are many-sided and all-comprehensive. How many things does his request to the Roman Church include! The request for their prayers, like the Church to whom it is directed, is cosmopolitan. He beseeches them, entreats them, a term indicating intensity and earnestness, "for the sake of Jesus Christ, to strive with him in their prayers for him." This he desires that he may be delivered from evil and designing men, who might hinder and embarrass him in his mission, then further that his service for the poor saints might be accepted by the saints, and that he might ultimately come unto them with joy that they might be refreshed.

How full of heart earnestness is his request! How tender and loving is his appeal! How touching and high is the motive to the highest and truest form of prayer, "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake!" Also for the love we bear to the Spirit, or for the love which the Spirit bears to us; by the ties of the holy brotherhood. By these lofty and constraining motives does he urge them to pray for him and to "strive with him" in their mutual praying. Paul is in the great prayer struggle, a struggle in which the mightiest issues are involved and imperiled; and he is in the midst of this struggle. He is committed to it because Christ is in it. He needs help, help which comes alone through prayer. So he pleads with his brethren to pray for him and with him.

By prayer enemies are to be swept out of the way. By prayer prejudices are to be driven out of the hearts of good men. His way to Jerusalem would be cleared of difficulties, the success of his mission would be secured, and the will of God and the good of the saints would be accomplished. All these marvelous ends would be secured by marvelous praying. Wonderful and world-wide are the results to be gained by mighty praying. If all apostolic successors had prayed as Paul did, if all Christians in all these ages had been one with apostolical men in the mighty wrestlings of prayer, how marvelous and divine would have been the history of God's Church! How unparalleled would have been its success! The glory of its millennium would have brightened and blessed the world ages ago.

We see in Paul's requests his estimate of the far-reaching power of prayer. Not that prayer has in it any talismanic force, nor that it is a fetish, but that it moves God to do things that it nominates. Prayer has no magic, potent charm in itself, but is only all potent because it gets the Omnipotent God to grant its request. A precedent basis in all prayer as expressed or understood by Paul is that "Ye strive together with me in your prayers for me." It is of the nature of a severe conflict in which Paul's soul is engaged, a wrestle, a hand-to-hand fight. The strain is severe and exhaustive to all the energies of the soul, and the issue is tossed in uncertainty. Paul in this prayer struggle needs reinforcements and divine help in his striving. He is in the midst of the struggle, and will bear the brunt, but he solicits and pleads for the help of others. Their prayers are just now needed, He needs help to offer intense prayers.

Prayer is not inaptly called "wrestling," because it is a most intense struggle. To prayer there are the greatest hindrances and the most inveterate foes. Mighty evil forces surge around the closets of prayer. Enemies strong and strongly entrenched are about the closets where praying is done. No feeble, listless act is this praying done by Paul. In this thing he has "put away childish things." The commonplace and the tame have been retired. Paul must do this praying mightily or not do it at all. Hell must feel and stagger and under note, sounded out for earnest, persistent prayer as the great spiritual conflict rages the mightiness of his prayer stroke, or he strikes not at all.

The strongest graces and the manliest efforts are requisite here. Strength is demanded in the praying done by Paul. Courage is at a premium in it. Timid touches and faint-hearted desires avail nothing in the mind of Paul which we are considering. Enemies are to be faced and routed and fields are to be won. The most unflagging and invincible bravery and the highest qualities of Christian soldierhood are demanded for prayer. It is a trumpet call to prayer, a chieftain's clarion.

XVI. PAUL AND HIS REQUESTS FOR PRAYER (Continued)

"We announce the law of prayer as follows: A Christian's prayer is a joint agreement of the will and his cabinet, the emotions, the conscience, the intellect, working in harmony at white heat, while the body co-operates under certain hygienic conditions to make the prayer long enough sustained at high voltage to insure tremendous results, supernatural and unearthly."—Rev. Homer W. Hodge

We come to the request of Paul made to the Church at Ephesus, found in the latter part of Ephes. 6 of the Epistle to those Christians: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" And for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, "For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak."

For this Church he had labored and prayed night and day, with many watchings and tears and much humility. As he drew a vivid picture of the Christian soldier, with his foes besetting him, he gave them this charge of praying specially for him. To these Ephesian Christians he gave a comprehensive statement of the necessity, nature and special benefits of prayer. It was to be urgent, covering all times and embracing all manner of places. Supplication must give intensity, the Holy Spirit must be invoked, vigilance and perseverance must be added, and the whole family of saints were involved. The force of his request for prayer centered on him, that he might be able to talk with force, fluency, directness and courage. Paul did not depend upon his natural gifts, but on those which came to him in answer to prayer. He was afraid he would be a coward, a dull, dry speaker, or a hesitating stammerer, and he urged these believers to pray that he might have courage, not only to speak clearly, but freely and fully. He desired them to pray that he might have boldness. No quality seems more important to the preacher than that of boldness. It is that positive quality which does not reckon consequences, but with freedom and fullness meets the crisis, faces a present danger, and discharges unawed a present duty. It was one of the marked characteristics of apostolic preachers and apostolic preaching. They were bold men, they were bold preachers. The reference to the manifestation of the principle by them is almost the record of their trials. It is the applause of their faith. There are many chains which enslave the preacher. His very tenderness makes him weak. His attachments to the people tend to bring him into bondage. His personal intercourse, his obligations to his people, his love for them, all tend to hamper his freedom and restrain his pulpit deliverances. What great need to be continually praying for boldness to speak boldly as he ought to speak! The prophets of old were charged not to be afraid of the faces of men. Unawed by the frowns of men, they were to declare the truth of God without apology, timidity, hesitancy or compromise. The warmth and freedom of conviction and of sincerity, the fearlessness of a vigorous faith, and above all the power of the Holy Ghost, are all wonderful helpers and elements of boldness. How all this should be coveted and sought with all earnestness by ministers of the Gospel in this day! Meekness and humility are high virtues of the first importance in the preacher, but these qualities do not at all militate against boldness. This boldness is not the freedom of passionate utterances. It is not scolding nor rashness. It speaks the truth in love. Boldness is not rudeness. Roughness dishonors boldness. It is as gentle as a mother with a babe, but as fearless as a lion standing before a foe. Fear, in the mild and innocent form of timidity, or in the criminal form of cowardice, has no place in the true ministry. Humble but holy boldness is of the very first importance. What hidden, mysterious mighty force can add courage to apostolical preaching, and give bolder utterances to apostolic lips? There is one answer, and it is that prayer can do the deed. What force can so affect and dominate evil that the very results of evil will be changed into good? We have the answer in Paul's words again, in connection with prayers made for him:

"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; Ye also helping together in prayer for us. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." We can see how the promises of God are made real and personal by prayer. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Here is a jeweled promise. Paul loved God, but he did not leave the promise alone, as a matter of course, to work out its blessed results. So he wrote to the Corinthians as we have before seen, "I am in trouble. I trust in God to deliver. Ye also helping together by prayer." Helping me by prayer, you help God to make the promise strong and rich in realization. Paul's prayer requests embraced "supplication for all saints," but especially for apostolic courage for himself. How much he needed this courage just as all true preachers, called of God, need it! Prayer was to open doors for apostolical labors, but at the same time it was to open apostolic lips to utter bravely and truly the apostolic message.

Hear him as he speaks to the Church at Colosses: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds;" That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak. "How appropriate such a request to be made by a present-day preacher to his congregation! How great the need of those things by the present-day preacher which Paul desired for himself!

As in the request to the Ephesians, Paul wants a "door of utterance" given him, that he may preach with the liberty of the Spirit, be delivered from being straitened in thought or hampered in delivery. Furthermore, he desires the ability to make manifest in the clearest terms, without confusion of thought, and with force of utterance, the Gospel "as he ought to speak," and just as every preacher should speak. Happy that preacher who ministers to a people who pray thus for him! And happier still if he inwardly feels, as he faces his responsible task and realizes how much he needs these things to preach clearly, forcibly and effectively, that he has urged his people to pray for him! Prayer transmutes crosses, trials and oppositions into blessings, and causes them to work together for good. "These shall turn to my salvation through your prayers," says Paul. Just as the same things today in the life of the preacher are transmuted into gracious blessings in the end, "ye also helping together by prayer." Sainly praying mightily helped Apostolic preaching and rescued apostolic men from many sore straits. So just such praying in these days will effect

like results in faithful preaching done by brave, fearless ministers. Prayer for the preacher avails just as prayer by the preacher avails. Two things are always factors in the life and work of a true preacher: First when he prays constantly, fervently and persistently for those to whom he preaches; and secondly, when those to whom he ministers pray for their preacher. Happy is the preacher so situated. Blessed is that congregation thus favored.

To the Church at Thessalonica Paul sends this pressing request, pointed, clear, and forcible: "Finally, brethren, 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 wicked and unreasonable men."

He has in mind a race-course, on which the racer is exerting himself to reach the goal. Hindrances are in the way of his success and must be removed, so that the racer may finally succeed and obtain the reward. The "Word of the Lord" is this racer, as preached by Paul. This Word is personified and there are serious impediments which embarrass the running of the Word. It must have "free course." Everything in the way and opposing its running must be taken out of its roadway. These impediments in the way of the Word of the Lord "running and being glorified" are found in the preacher himself, in the Church to whom he ministers, and in the sinners around him. The Word runs and is glorified when it has unobstructed access to the minds and hearts of those to whom it is preached, when sinners are convicted for sin, when they seriously consider the claims of God's Word on them, and when they are induced to pray for themselves, asking for pardoning mercy. It is glorified when saints are instructed in religious experience, corrected of errors of doctrine and mistakes in practice, and when they are led to seek for higher things and to pray for deeper experiences in the Divine life.

Mark you. It is not when the preacher is glorified because of the wonderful success wrought by the Word. It is not when people praise him unduly, and make much of him because of his wonderful sermons, his great eloquence and his remarkable gifts. The preacher is kept in the background in all this work of glorification, even though he is foremost as being the object of all this praying. Prayer is to do all these things. So Paul urges, entreats, insists, "Pray for us." And it is not so much prayer for Paul personally in his Christian life and religious experience. All this needed much prayer. It was really for him officially, prayer for him in the office and work of a Gospel minister. His tongue must be unloosed in preaching, his mouth unstopped, and his mind set free. Prayer must help in his religious life not so much because it would help to "work out his own salvation," but rather because right living would give strength to the Word of the Lord, and would save him from being a hindrance to the Word which he preached. And as he desires that no hindrance should be in himself which would defeat his own preaching, so he wants all hindrances taken away from the churches to whom he ministers that Church people may not stand in the way or weigh down the Word as it runs on the race-course attempting to reach the goal, even the minds and hearts of the people. Furthermore, he wishes hindrances in the unsaved to be set aside that God's Word as preached by him may reach their hearts and be glorified in their salvation. With all this before him, Paul sends this pressing request to these believers at Thessalonica, "Pray for us," because praying by true Christians would greatly help in the running of the Word of the Lord. Wise that preacher who has the eyes to see these things, and who realizes that his success largely depends upon praying of this kind on the part of his people for him. How much do we need churches now who, having the preacher in mind and the preached Word on their hearts, pray for him that "the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified." One other item in this request is worth noting: "That we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men." Such men are hindrances in the way of the Word of the Lord. Few preachers but are harassed by them and need to be delivered from them. Prayer helps to bring such a deliverance to preachers from "unreasonable and wicked men." Paul was annoyed by such characters, and for this very reason he urged prayer for him that he might find deliverance from them.

Summing it all up, we find that Paul feels that the success of the Word, its liberty and largeness, are bound up in their prayers, and that their failure to pray would restrict its influence and its glory. His deliverance from unreasonable and wicked men as well as his safety, he asserts, are in some way dependent upon their prayers. These prayers, while they greatly helped him to preach, would at the same time protect his person from the cruel purposes of wicked and unreasonable men.

In Hebrews 13:9, Paul thus opens his heart to those Hebrew Christians in asking them to pray for him: "Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." In this prayer request, Paul's inward consciousness of his integrity of heart and his internal witness to his personal honesty come out and are a basic truth of his Christian character. No room for blame does he find in himself. "Pray for us." Your prayers for us will find in me honest integrity and honest execution and honest administration of all prayer results. The request is intended to stir up the saints to more earnest praying, more devotion to prayer, and more urgency in prayer. Prayer must affect his visit to them, would hasten it and enlarge its beneficial results. Paul is on the most cordial and freest terms with Philemon. He is anxious and expects to visit him at some future day and makes the appointment. He takes it for granted that Philemon is praying, for as this man had been converted under his ministry, it is assumed that he has been taught the Pauline lesson of prayer. He assumes also that prayer will open up the way for his visit, remove the hindrances and bring them graciously together. So he requests Philemon to prepare a lodging place for him, adding, "I trust through your prayers I shall be given to you." Paul had the idea that his movements were hindered or helped by the prayers of his brethren.

("Prayer and Praying Men" ; EM Bounds; Chapter 15-16 ; Edward McKendree Bounds (August 15, 1835 – August 24, 1913) was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and author of eleven books, nine of which focused on the subject of prayer. Public Domain)

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 424-426)

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