

## Midweek Message

*“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”*

(Colossians 4:2 ESV)

As God’s beloved people we should always cherish our times of prayer with Him. God is always just a prayer away, often waiting for us to come before Him and bring all our cares to Him because He cares for us. As I mentioned in last week’s midweek message, we will never be able to exhaust all that Scripture teaches regarding the wonderful privilege we’ve been given to come before our God in prayer. However, we can begin to grasp something of what God tells us and my intention with this sermon series and these midweek messages is to express some of what Scripture says regarding prayer. Now, this week I’d like to talk a little bit about the power of prayer. I remember reading a quote from a pastor of years gone by which something to this effect: “What Satan fears most, even the weakest believer, is a Christian on his knees before God.” I certainly believe that to be true because there’s great power unleashed in our lives and in this world when we get on our knees before Almighty God. So, let’s look at some of the aspects regarding the power that’s unleashed in prayer.

**First**, prayer unleashes God’s power of salvation. I hope you all realize that our beginning as believers occurred the moment we called out to God for salvation. In fact, I don’t believe anyone can become a believer without having come to God, confessing sin, asking for forgiveness, and embracing the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Apostle John tells us a Scripture we talked briefly about last week, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 ESV)*. The word “confess” reveals that we must express something to God so that we might be forgiven and cleansed of our unrighteousness. Not only is that in regard to our personal sins and our coming to faith in Jesus, but it also has to do with God’s continuing work of redemption in this world. Jesus made this point when he said,

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:36-38 ESV).*

It’s through prayer, for ourselves as well as for those who yet need to come to faith, that God acts in power to redeem His people from their sins.

**Secondly**, prayer unleashes God’s power of peace. We’ve seen this before as we’ve talked about the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians where he tells us,

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7 ESV).

How wonderful to know that we can come before our God with all the issues that concern us and then, having done so, leave those issues with Him and receive that perfect peace that passes all understanding. Perhaps that’s why the Apostle Paul could say with such confidence, *“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV)*. God is able to answer us and fill us with His peace so that we might rest in Him.

**Third**, prayer unleashes God's power for strength. We're all prone to fall into temptation, to give into to the tempter's snares that are meant to trip us up and keep us from glorifying God. When Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, at one point He told His disciples,

*"And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, 'So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak'" (Matthew 26:40-41 ESV).*

You see, we're all basically weak because of the sinful flesh even though we're now redeemed and have been given new life in Jesus. Temptations will come and unless we're spending time in prayer with the Lord, we might fail and fall into sin. However, not only do we need strength in order to resist temptation, we also need strength so that we can carry out God's calling for us every day. The Apostle Paul tells us,

*"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:18-20 ESV).*

We often look at the great fathers of the faith as though they were super Christians but that's not the case. They needed prayer too so that they might not fail to fulfill God's calling on their lives. Even Jesus, God the Son in human form, prayed for strength to carry out the mission of accomplishing our redemption as He sought to do the will of God the Father.

**Fourth**, prayer unleashes God's power in wisdom. How many times have you struggled with knowing what to do in a particular situation? I know I have and yet God tells us,

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:5-8 ESV).*

God is always there to guide us in the decisions we need to make in life. Wisdom is knowing what to do with the knowledge we've been given. Many times, those decisions are easily made through a search of God's Word. Other times we simply need to contemplate on figuring out what's the best for us as well as those around us. However, whatever the case may be our Lord has promised, that when we look to Him with believing hearts, He will help us in our understanding of what we should do as we journey through life.

**Finally**, (and yes, there are many more), prayer unleashes God's power in healing. We see this especially from James where we're told,

*"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:13-15 ESV).*

Listen, God is always there for us. He doesn't always say yes to our prayers as He knows what's best in every situation. However, God's power is unleashed in our lives and in this world when we, as God's beloved people, go to Him in prayer.

***Pastor Mark***