

**I. THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER IS VITAL TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

- A. Continually abiding in Christ through a life of prayer is vital and important to the New Testament Church.
- B. If we do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, then we have nothing. This is not speaking just of salvation, but of an abiding relationship.

*John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

*Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

- 1. One can preach the best sermons, have the biggest miracles, be respected by peers and enemies, have the biggest ministry/business, etc.. yet, without Christ, we are nothing.
- 2. A relationship with Christ is not just about what you do, but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That does not mean just praying a prayer and thinking that you are a Christian. What matters is an abiding relationship with a living God. If we don't have this, we have nothing. Our works will be tested by fire.

*1 Corinthians 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*

**II. WE ARE AT WAR! THE NEED FOR VIGILANCE IN PRAYER**

- A. We must awaken to the fact that there is a carefully orchestrated and calculated plan that is custom designed for our destruction.

*1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

*John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

- B. God has given us resources by the Holy Spirit and instructions in how to move forward in the face of spiritual opposition.

*Colossians 4:2-3 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;<sup>3</sup> meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains.*

- C. **Continue earnestly.** Devote yourself, be steadfast toward. “Be steady, don’t let up.”
1. We must not give up praying. There will be times when we grow weary, complacent, lazy, confused in our priorities, distracted by the things that need to be done.
- D. **Being vigilant in it.** To be awake, alert, keeping watch. The ministry of prayer in a church and in your personal life is not something that we can take lightly. It’s not something that we do when we have a little extra time or we need a little extra help from heaven.

*Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

1. A life of prayer causes the spirit of man to become alive and we receive grace to put to death the deeds of the flesh.

### III. PRAYER (IN WARFARE) MUST BE TEMPERED WITH THANKSGIVING

- A. Thanksgiving protects and keeps our heart from weirdness in our spiritual life. It keeps us away from bitterness in the midst of harsh warfare.
1. A believer is always giving thanks no matter what. We don’t always understand the “why” in life, but we do always know what is God’s will for us: to give thanks in everything.

*1 Thes. 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

2. Our circumstances will change but God is constant in His goodness.
3. Some of Jesus’ greatest miracles were after He gave thanks to God.

*John 6:11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*

*John 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.*

### IV. PRAYER OPENS A DOOR IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM

- A. **That God would open to us a door:** In response to continuing earnest, vigilant prayer, God opens doors for the word to go forth, for the mystery of Christ to be revealed.

***2 Thes. 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you.***

B. Paul is in chains. At various times in his ministry, he was literally imprisoned and in chains for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He calls the believers to continued, vigilant prayer with thanksgiving so that doors would be opened.

1. Those who are bound and imprisoned, will be set free. We cannot simply “stumble into” such a ministry that brings freedom to people. It comes through continuing, earnest, fervent, vigilant prayer with thanksgiving.

***Matt. 17:21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.***

2. It is something that we must be intentional and put our energy, resources, and money behind so that we make sure we do not miss it. The identity of the people of God is to be a house of prayer.

***Matthew 21:13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"***

C. Peter was kept in constant prayer until the Lord set him free.

***Acts 12:5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.***

D. Prayer opens a door for the revelation of the beauty of Jesus Christ to the human heart.

1. Mystery of Christ speaks of that which was once hidden, but now revealed. No one could have imagined that God's plan would be so amazing. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would lay down His life for us.
2. Prayer makes a way for people to truly know Christ.

***Eph. 1:17-18 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,<sup>18</sup> the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints..***

E. Jesus set an example for us. He prayed in the morning hours, sometimes all through the night. Jesus prayed when picking 12 disciples. Before major signs, wonders and miracles. We must function as a house of prayer. This is our life-line. Life-blood. Without the corporate and personal life of prayer, we merely become people who do things. Do-do.

1. We can prophesy, we can preach, we can do things. But do we really know Christ?
2. It is in the place of prayer that we truly know God and understand His heart.

## V. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

A. Develop a daily devotional habit. This is your life-line.

- B. Devote yourself to pray for the church. That God's Kingdom would come and His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. When God thinks of us, what is on His heart?  
"Lord, let that be done here!"