

Why Do We Need Prayer In Our Day?

The International Sunday School Lesson for Sunday, July 25, 2010
2 Thessalonians 3:1-15

“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith” (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2—NASB-U).

“Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you, and that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people; for not all have faith” (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2—NRSV).

“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 unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2—KJV).

Paul asked the church in Thessalonica to pray for him and his evangelistic team in a way that we can use to pray for the evangelistic work in our churches today. When he asked the church for prayer, he sought God’s help so people everywhere would gladly receive and honor the words and works of Jesus Christ as they taught about Him. He wanted divine assistance in preaching, teaching, and writing his letters, for he knew that “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1). Paul knew from experience and his study of the scriptures that, in some way beyond human understanding, prayers make a difference in what God will do to fulfill His good intentions for our effectiveness as believers. God could happily answer Paul’s prayer requests, and the prayers of the Thessalonians, because they prayed that God would enable Paul and those with him to successfully serve and lead others to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul also understood that his endeavors would bring increasing and more severe opposition from evil people. These evil people would try a variety of ways to silence Paul or lessen his spiritual influence. Sometimes they used the government, and had Paul thrown into prison. At other times, they caused riots and blamed the civil unrest on Paul. Assuredly, churches need to pray for the divine protection of God’s people, especially as more people begin honoring God and coming to faith. — Copyright 2010 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Questions for Further Thought

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1. Is it easy or difficult for you to think of some people as evil or wicked or under the influence of the evil one? Why do you think it is important for Christians to remember that evil and wicked beings and people are fighting against them?
2. In what ways can a church leader misuse his position or authority in order to take advantage of new believers or a church? What safeguards can a church create to protect herself and new believers?
3. When people can so easily change churches today, many churches and church leaders now refuse to try to discipline a member that misbehaves. How can this refusal harm the church? How can this refusal harm the one who needs to be disciplined?
4. How do you feel when a stranger asks you for money, either on a street or in your church? Why do you feel that way? If you give to them, why do you do so? If you give to them, do you do so for the right reasons? How can you give without encouraging idleness?
5. How can churches better help those in their church who would like to work or need to work but cannot work for good reasons? If you know of someone who needs work and/or compassionate care, pray for them now, and ask the Lord to show you how they can be helped. Pray for them to receive the help they need.