

THE BIG IDEA CURRICULUM
Sermon: Prayer & Mission | 23.05.09 | Kasper Haughton Jr.

Introduction

The small group study for this week is a further study into the life 'devoted to prayer' (Col. 4:2). The group dynamic will hopefully take on the spirit of study the Berean church embraced in Acts 17:11. After Paul's sermons, they dived into the Word in small groups to see if what he said really matched up with the rest of the Bible.

Paul's encouragement in Col. 4:2-6 and Eph. 6:18-20 center around a prayer-filled life leading to the spreading of the Gospel as we join our brothers and sisters in the 'fight' for Christ. These passages aren't the only places in scripture where this concept is explained. Paul's writings all begin with Jesus, His ministry, and His teaching. So today we go back to the source: back to Jesus.

As an introduction, re-read the core scripture passages from this week's sermon as a group. Ephesians 6:18-20. Colossians 4:2-6.

Discussion

In both Ephesians and Colossians, Paul includes requests for prayer that give insight into his own personal prayer life.

- Knowing that he was in prison at the time of writing these letters, what was Paul praying about?
- More importantly, what wasn't he praying for?

- In all honesty, what do we pray for when praying for ourselves? For other Christians? For non-Christians?

Explanation

Turn to John 17. In this chapter Jesus begins to pray in front of His disciples. It is one of the few places in the Bible where we can see the entirety of one of Jesus' prayers to His (and our) Father. He first prays for Himself, then for His disciples (which can be seen as applying to Christians throughout the ages), then He prays for those who haven't yet believed and chosen to follow Him.

As we're seeking to explain the concept of prayer further by studying Jesus' example, I encourage the small groups to prayerfully read through this chapter together. A recommended approach is to read, pausing at each section with these objectives in mind:

- What key words or concepts do you see Jesus repeat through each section? Through the entire prayer?
- What is Jesus praying for? What is He *not* praying for?
- How are the key concepts of Jesus' prayer reflected in Paul's prayers and counsel for prayer?

Application

- What was Jesus' sense of mission? What sense of mission did He want *us* to have?
- How are we to pray for ourselves, with the awareness of mission Jesus and Paul possessed?
- What should motivate us to the mission of spreading the "mystery" of Christ and the Gospel?
Hint: Watchfulness (Jn 17:14-16, Eph. 6:10-13, 1Pet. 5:8-9) Thankfulness (Col. 1:9-14, Jn. 17:2-3)

Challenge

My challenge to you this week is two-fold. First, it was a real blessing this week in my personal devotions to re-read the entire letter to the Colossians. It made me come back to the basics of Life in Jesus in a way I hadn't experienced in a while. I'd love to share this experience with you. I challenge you to read through this short 4-chapter book in the next coming days.

Secondly, I challenge you to devote yourselves to prayer, being *watchful* and *thankful*. And pray that God may open a door for His Word for His church, so that we all may proclaim the mystery of *Jesus* clearly, *as we should*. I challenge you to also be wise in the way you act towards those '*outside*' your '*in-crowd*.' Make the most of *every* opportunity for connection with others. All this is so your conversations and relationships filled with Christ's *Grace* and '*salty flavour*' may give you grounds to witness to *everyone*!

- Kasper