



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 30.07.2023

“Prayer Matters”

Preacher

Ps. Joshua Plumb

Scripture

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

Colossians 4:2-6

Thought

Our journey through the letter to the Colossian Church has reminded us that as followers of Christ, our position is no longer one of darkness, but one of light. We have taken off the old and put on the new, and this impacts our practical lives through our behaviour. Yet we are reminded that we cannot do this alone. Mere will power and just trying to be a better person leads us down the religious road to burnout. Rather, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit each and every moment, and allow Him to lead us onward and upward on our faith journey as we rise in Him.

Today's verses call us, as followers of Christ, to devote ourselves to prayer. As Paul calls the Colossian Church to this discipline of consecrated contesting, so he also calls us. He reminds us that prayer makes a difference, and



because of this, it's important to be intentional in making prayer a pattern in our lives.

Paul himself exemplified this, he was continually in prayer for those he wrote to. He showed us what it looks like to be devoted to the practice of prayer, and therefore we can follow his lead. We may consider ourselves devoted to God, but what does it look like to devote ourselves to a practice, to an act such as prayer? In short, it means to keep showing up, to allow prayer to shape our life, and in turn to allow Christ free reign over our focus and our schedules.

Prayer wakes us up to the reality of what God is doing in our lives. It makes us aware of the things in our life that could lead us away from Christ instead of leaning into Him. It's so easy to get into a rhythm of religious acts, but prayer draws us back to the reality of what is going on in our lives, and also highlights the things that may distract and draw us away. Don't be drawn away from our focus on the Father. Let prayer be the conduit to bringing our attention to Him, in all things and in all seasons.

Paul also binds prayer together with gratitude. It's the art of being watchful and thankful. Psalm 69:14 says "I will magnify the Lord with thanksgiving." This is the key to thankfulness, to magnify Him, to look up to Him and not the world around us, to not let the little things occupy the space in our minds, but to allow ourselves to be in awe of God. Magnifying the Lord means to allow God to become more true to His proper size. Thankfulness changes our perspective and therefore puts everything else in the right perspective. Our challenges and troubles are still real, but they become more true to their size next to Him.

May we lean into the heart of the Father, whose love never fails, whose joy never ends, and who holds our worlds in His everlasting arms. To step into contested places, to keep showing up even in the face of resistance. Even when it feels empty, even when what we see doesn't seem to align with what we know to be true. We turn up. We lean into the heart of the Father. He shapes our world as we continue to pray, to build the practice of prayer into our lives, and to constantly engage in the art of relationship with Christ. Not striving, but engaging in patterns of devotion and trust, bound together in gratitude for all He has done, and all that He is. He never fails.



Discussion Points

1. At the heart of it, what actually is prayer?
2. What do you think living a life of prayer and gratitude looks like in your day to day world? What might it look like in the good times, and in the hard times?
3. How does prayer and gratitude affect those around us, and the world as a whole?

Personal application + Prayer

Lord,

Teach me what it means to devote myself to the practice of prayer. May I truly know the depth of relationship that You have called me to, but also help me to understand what it means to live a life of gratitude from a deep well of joy which only You can bring. Let my life be a song, and let it bring praise to You always.

Amen.