

“Constant in Prayer”
Romans 1:9
(Preached at Trinity, December 17, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we saw last time, **Verse 8** begins a section in which Paul writes in a more personal tone. This will continue through **Verse 15**. He is writing with a mind to their mutual encouragement and edification.
Romans 1:12 – “. . . that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”
2. Paul begins by expressing the thanksgiving he gives to God for their faith that was being spoken of throughout the world.
Romans 1:8 – “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
3. Paul is grateful for their reputation, their consistent testimony to the world. Their faith was an active faith. They were living their faith. Our church and we as individuals must live in such a manner that we will find favor in their eyes.
 - A. On one hand Jesus taught that the world will hate us. Tribulation is consistent with the Christian life.
 - B. On the other hand, our righteous life should be one that others admire. We must be people of principle, people who stand upon the truth of Scripture. Our love and compassion, our generosity, our gentleness should be our reputation. The world will always look favorably upon these things.
 - C. So while they hate us they will also respect us.
Luke 2:52 – “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”
Acts 2:46-47 – “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
4. As we continue with **Verse 9** Paul makes a great statement about his own life.
Romans 1:9 – “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;”
5. Over and over in Paul’s ministry we find that he was a man of prayer.
Ephesians 1:15-16 – “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, ¹⁶ Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;”
Colossians 1:9 – “For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;”
Philippians 1:3-4 – “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,”

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 – “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; ³ Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;”

Philemon 1:4 – “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,”

6. This was part of the chief work for the apostles and an essential aspect of the work for pastors today.

Acts 6:3-4 – “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

7. Prayer, however, is not just the work of the ministry. It is the work of every believer.

A. God’s great command to us:

1 Thessalonians 5:17- “Pray without ceasing.”

B. Paul continually encouraged others to pray for him

Romans 15:30 – “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me”

Ephesians 6:18-19 – “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; ¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,”

Colossians 4:2-4 – “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; ³ Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: ⁴ That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

8. All of this demonstrates the importance Paul placed upon prayer. This morning I want to take a few moments to draw out some implications in Paul’s prayer life that we must apply to our own lives.

I. A busy schedule is no excuse for not praying

A. Paul’s life was incredibly busy

1. Paul went on several major missionary journeys.

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 – “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. ²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. ²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ *In* weariness and painfulness, *in* watchings often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness.”

2. He was responsible for planting dozens of churches and had oversight over dozens more. He didn’t start the Church of Rome but still gave himself to caring for this church.

2 Corinthians 11:28 – “Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

3. He had numerous pastors under his watchful care.
 - a. He wrote to Timothy and Titus as his own sons in the faith
 - b. He gathered the elders of Ephesus and rehearsed the care he had given to them.

Acts 20:17-20 – “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. ¹⁸ And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, ¹⁹ Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: ²⁰ And how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,”
 4. In spite of this amazing schedule, Paul was a man who spent hours in prayer.

2 Timothy 1:3 – “I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;”
 5. This is true of all who are pious

1 Timothy 5:5 – “Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.”
- B. We often think of great people of prayer as being people with much free time
1. We think of prayer warriors as being little old ladies strong in the faith who give themselves to much prayer.
 2. It is easy to brush off our limited prayer to having such a busy life
We have work and children and so many responsibilities.
 3. The truth is some of the busiest people have been the greatest prayer warriors.
 4. Luther: "I have so much to do today that I should spend the first three hours in prayer."

II. All prayer must be lifted up through Jesus Christ

- A. This is high Christology – all access to the Father is through Christ
- Romans 1:8** – “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ”
- Ephesians 2:18** - "For through Him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."
1. Jesus Christ is our Mediator – our access to the Father

John 14:6 - "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

John 14:14 – “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.”
 2. We must pray in His name

John 15:16 – “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”
 3. We must pray in His will, for His glory

1 John 5:14 – “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”

- B. We must pray unto the Father
1. Jesus taught this in His model prayer
"Our Father which art in heaven"
 2. Paul prayed before the Father
Romans 1:8 – "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ"
Ephesians 3:14 – "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,"
- III. Thanksgiving must be the foundation of all our prayers
Romans 1:8 – "First, I thank my God"
- A. The Bible tells us that one of the dominant characteristics of the ungodly is the sin of ingratitude.
1. They simply rule out God. They refuse to see the glory of God in His creation. They refuse to express any dependence upon God. They rule out God and therefore they do not thank Him.
 2. God sees ingratitude as great wickedness
Romans 1:21 – "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
- B. Likewise, gratitude characterizes the believer
1. Look at the heart of David
1 Chronicles 29:10-13 – "Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed *be* thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. ¹² Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand *is* power and might; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all. ¹³ Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name."
 2. It honors God when we express gratitude to Him
It pleases God when we respond to Him with thanksgiving
Psalms 92:1 – "*It is a good thing* to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:"
Philippians 4:6 – "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."
Revelation 7:12 – "Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

- IV. We must pray in the will of God for the glory of God
Romans 1:10 – “Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.”
- A. The lost man is completely self-serving
 1. He does everything to fulfill his own selfish end
 2. If he does pray his prayers are all to fulfill his own selfish desires
 - B. The believer has turned his life over to Christ
 1. The nature of true repentance is to turn from self and sin
Isaiah 55:7 – “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts”
 2. The Christian life is a life of submission
 - a. Our prayers must be offered up in submission to the Father
 - b. Listen to the prayer of Christ
Luke 22:42 – “Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”
 3. God has infinite wisdom and knows what is best for His children. We must submit to His wisdom and will.
 - C. We must pray for the glory of God
 1. God does all things for His own glory
 He has ordained that we pray
 He has ordained the outcome of our prayers
 2. Our duty is to pray, “Oh God have thine own way with me for thine own glory.

Conclusion:

1. These are the things we need to see about the prayer life of Paul.
 Paul commanded us to pray without ceasing because this was his own life.
 - A. We must pray continually even when our schedule is hectic.
 - B. We must pray in the name of Christ
 - C. We must pray with a spirit of thanksgiving.
 - D. We must pray in the will of God for the glory of God.
Revelation 4:11 – “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”