

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

First RPC Durham

I. Praise and the Christian's Prayer (v 16).**A.** Opening comments upon the text:

- 1) What is prayer? (*Larger Catechism* 178)
- 2) The frequency of our prayer (Jms 5:13)
- 3) The assurance of this command (1 Thes 4:3)

B. Rejoicing in the Lord: Defined and Described (Phil 4:4; Mt 6:9; Song of Songs 5:10, 16; Jn 17:24b).**C.** Causes of the neglect of praise in prayer

- 1) There is a lack of knowing God
- 2) Not making time in our prayer for praise
- 3) Too busy thinking of ourselves or of others and not of God.

D. Motivations to encourage rejoicing in the Lord:

- 1) We are to know God (Phil 3:10-11)
- 2) In knowing the excellencies and loveliness of God, we see the baseness of ourselves (Jb 40:4a).
- 3) God is worthy of praise (Psa 145:3)
- 4) Prayer as an act of worship is to be God-centered.
- 5) Praise of God fuels our faith in bringing forth petitions (*Heidelberg Catechism* 120-121).
- 6) Praise of God encourages holiness (Gen 39:9b).
- 7) Praise of God discourages sin (1 Thes 5:15).
- 8) Praise of God in prayer is an anticipation of heaven (Rev 5:13)

E. Further instructions on praise and the Christian's prayer:

- 1) Praise God with His own praises from Scripture.
- 2) Meditate upon and praise God for His attributes (*WSC* 4).
- 3) Be regular in your rejoicing in the Lord.

II. Petition and the Christian's Prayer (v 17).**A.** Petitionary prayer: Defined and Described (Mt 6:11-13)**B.** Causes for neglect of petitionary prayer

- 1) Self-Reliance and Pride
- 2) Shame of doubt before the Lord (Mt 8:26; Mk 9:24).
- 3) Shame of confessing particular sins (1 Jn 1:8)
- 4) Not making time for prayer
- 5) A lack of discipline and Christian maturity

C. The Regularity of Prayer (Psa 55:17)

- 1) In private (Lk 22:39)
- 2) In our families.

3) In the Church.

D. The Spontaneity of Prayer

- 1) Among yourselves (2 Chr 18:31)
- 2) With others

E. The Longevity of Prayer (Luke 18:1; Psa 66:18; Jms 4:3; Gen 32:26).**F.** Motivations to encourage petitionary prayer:

- 1) There is no better place to leave a matter than in God's hands.
- 2) God answers prayer (2 Chr 16:9a)
- 3) Petitionary prayer encourages peace (Phil 4:6-7)
- 4) Petitionary prayer encourages humility (Psa 100:3).
- 5) Petitionary prayer fosters love for others.

G. Further instructions on petition and the Christian's prayer:

- 1) Tie your petitions to the Scriptures (Psa 37:4)
- 2) Remember God's promises (1 Jn 1:9)
- 3) Be regular in your petitions to God, and do not grow weary.

III. Thanksgiving and the Christian's Prayer (v 18).**A.** Thanksgiving: Defined and Described (Psa 100:4, 104:24, 98:1-2; 1 Tim 4:4; Psa 28:6)**B.** Causes for neglect of thanksgiving in prayer

- 1) Preoccupation with discontentment and worry.
- 2) An attitude of entitlement (Pr 13:25)
- 3) Self-sufficiency.
- 4) Forgetfulness.
- 5) Objection: How can I be thankful when I have so little? (Jn 6:11)
- 6) Objection: How can I give thanks in severe providence? (Psa 88:18)

C. Motivations to encourage us to give thanksgiving:

- 1) God has taught us to pray by His Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26)
- 2) God hears our prayers through Jesus Christ (Heb 7:25)
- 3) God answers our prayer (Psa 116:1)
- 4) That everything good is from God (Jms 1:17)
- 5) Even that which is unpleasant is for our good.
- 6) Everything is given to us freely by our God
- 7) For the assurance of our forgiveness in Jesus Christ (Rom 11:33-36)

D. Further instructions on thanksgiving and prayer:

- 1) Recall God's answers to your prayers (Psa 56:8)
- 2) Give thanks to God with others in both conversations and prayer (Heb 10:24-25)
- 3) Give thanks to God in response to Scripture reading.
- 4) Be regular in your thanksgiving to God.