

## EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #56

Romans 15:30-33

God places a very high priority on prayer. Jesus Christ personally spent a great deal of time preaching and teaching regarding prayer and the subject of prayer occurs over 170 times in the N.T. **When we read a verse like Romans 15:30, it is clear that the entire Trinity wants the believer to have a life of prayer.** In Scripture there are various kinds of prayer and shades of meaning of prayer:

**Type #1** - The prayer for salvation. This is a prayer an unbeliever must pray which centers on asking Jesus Christ to be one's personal Savior (Romans 10:13; Acts 2:21; Isaiah 30:18-19).

**Type #2** - There is the prayer of entreaty. I Timothy 2:1a - Prayer that comes from specific need. This is a prayer made by a believer in which he petitions God and asks God for something. The believer has some need and he personally goes to God and asks God to meet that need (Luke 11:9-10).

**Type #3** - The prayer called prayer. I Timothy 2:1b - Prayer that is sacred and moves toward God.

**Type #4** - The prayer of thanksgiving. I Timothy 2:1d - Prayer that expresses thankfulness to God.

**Type #5** - The prayer of exaltation. This is a prayer made by a believer in which there is an acknowledgment of God's greatness, power and majesty (Jude 24-25).

**Type #6** - The prayer of confession. This is a prayer made by a believer in which he confesses his sin so that he may maintain fellowship with God (I John 1:9).

**Type #7** - The prayer of submission. This is a prayer made by a believer in which he acknowledges to God that he will submit to the will of God (Luke 22:42).

**Type #8** - The prayer of petition - Prayer that is specifically designed to ask God for something.

**Type #9** - The prayer of destruction (Psalm 109) - Righteous prayer for God's vengeance.

**Type #10** - The prayer of intercession. This is the prayer of a believer in which he goes to God and intercedes on behalf of someone else. It is a prayer that rallies around one sick, or one who is in need or one who has fallen into sin and prays fervently for that person (**Romans 15:30**). It is this prayer Paul is after right here.

**IN ORDER FOR GOD'S PERFECT WILL TO BE ACCOMPLISHED,  
GOD'S PEOPLE INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS AND THEY MUST PRAY.**

It makes no difference how spiritual a person may profess to be. It makes no difference how scholarly the person may be. It makes no difference as to how long we have been a believer. Without prayer, there will never be a fulfillment of the perfect will of God.

I am convinced that one of the reasons why we don't pray as we ought is because we don't realize the terrible warfare we are actually in (Ephesians 6). Prayer is a striving and a struggle. In fact, the Greek word Paul uses in **Romans 15:30** for "strive" (συν-αγωνίζομαι) is one from which we get our English word agonize. Prayer is a tough, agonizing discipline.

When a believer prays, God will answer in one of six ways:

**Answer #1** - God may answer "yes." Prayer was being made for Peter and God immediately answered (Acts 12:1-19).

**Answer #2** - God may answer "no." Paul prayed about his thorn in the flesh and God answered "no" for He had a better plan (II Corinthians 12:8-9).

**Answer #3** - God may answer "wait." Sometimes God will answer the prayer, but not immediately and He desires His people wait on Him and remain faithful to Him (Romans 1:10-13).

**Answer #4** - God may answer "work." God may answer get busy. Sometimes God may say to us, "Stop praying and start obeying" (I Corinthians 6:18).

**Answer #5** - God may answer keep praying and watch (Matthew 24:20-42).

**Answer #6** - God may answer pray more (Luke 18:1-8).

**Paul was absolutely convinced that in order for him to accomplish all of God's will, prayer must be made on his behalf (Romans 15:32).** Righteous people can pray and move God (James 5:16). All great men of the faith have been convinced of the same reality of the importance of prayer.

Paul is writing this letter to the Romans in A.D. 57-58. It will be approximately 2-3 years before Paul will actually go to Rome. Was there something wrong with his prayer life? Was there something wrong with the prayer life of the Romans?

There are at least seven hindrances stated in Scripture to answered prayer.

**Hindrance #1** - We pray with wrong motives. James 4:3

**Hindrance #2** - We pray with wrong theology. John 15:7

**Hindrance #3** - We pray with a lack of faith. Mark 11:22-24; James 1:6-7

**Hindrance #4** - We pray with unconfessed sin. Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-2; I John 1:8-2:2

**Hindrance #5** - We pray with stingy attitudes. I John 3:17-22

**Hindrance #6** - We pray with an unforgiving attitude. Mark 11:25-26; Matthew 6:14-15

**Hindrance #7** - We pray with improper attitudes in marriage. I Peter 3:1-7

Paul was not a man who had any of these hindrances in his own life.

- 1) His motives were spiritual (Rom.1:11, 15) - go to Rome to help them spiritually.
- 2) His theology was sound - He wrote this doctrine of the gospel.
- 3) His faith was unwavering.
- 4) His life was pure.
- 5) His attitudes were not selfish.
- 6) His spirit was forgiving.
- 7) He was not married.

In this text, Paul specifically asks the Romans to pray for three requests:

**REQUEST #1** – He asks that he be delivered from unbelieving Jews. **15:31a**

**REQUEST #2** – He asks that he be accepted by Jerusalem believers. **15:31b**

**REQUEST #3** – He asks that he would have a joyous trip to Rome. **15:32**

We may assume that many of the Romans prayed for Paul because of what happened:

**(Answer to Prayer Request #1)** - Acts 21:31-37

**Paul was delivered from unbelieving Jews even though it was a very close call.** The way he wound up being delivered was by being beaten up and taken by the Roman soldiers and thrown in jail. Imprisonment turned out to be Paul's means of deliverance. God's answers are in His way, not in our way.

**(Answer to Prayer Request #2)** - Acts 21:17-20

**Paul was accepted by the believing Jew.** This is a miraculous answer to prayer since Paul was the one who initially pursued and persecuted these people.

**(Answer to Prayer Request #3)** - Acts 28:11-16

**Paul did have a joyous trip to Rome.** There was a plot to kill Paul so he went to trial before Agrippa (Acts 26:28). At that trial he appealed to Caesar (26:32). He was taken by a boat which was involved in a shipwreck (27:39-44). He was bitten by a deadly viper and shook it off as nothing (28:46). When he finally gets to Rome he goes as a prisoner (28:16).

When we pray for something, here is what we can expect:

- 1) We can expect God to answer;
- 2) We can expect God to answer His way;
- 3) We can expect His answer not to be our way.

Those who want to do things for God must talk to God. We can do all the religious stuff we want to, but without prayer, His will won't ever be accomplished in our lives or in this church.

It is quite obvious from **Romans15:33**, that contextually the peace of God is connected to prayer. More prayer equals more peace.