

Paul's Prayer

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Date: 21 January 2007

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[0:00] Let's take God's Word and turn to the book of Philippians, chapter 1, Paul's epistle to the Philippians, chapter 1.

I'll read the first eleven verses in your hearing. Would you stand together with me for the reading of God's Word? Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.

Now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart.

For whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the Gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

[1:24] And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in love and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

What must have been the prayer life of a man who could say in one place, pray without ceasing, and could say in another place, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Unless he was a two-faced hypocrite, he must have been one great man of prayer. And that's what we find in the Scriptures with regard to the Apostle Paul. And here in this little book of Philippians, from a prison cell in Rome, we get a peek into Paul's otherwise private prayer life.

He opens the door, just a crack on his prayer closet, and tells the Philippian saints that he was praying for them. Now in verses 3 and 4, he told them that his prayers for them were marked by thanksgiving and joy.

Every time I think of you, I give thanks for you, and in all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. And now in our text this morning, verses 9 through 11, he tells them what he is praying for them.

[3:02] And in this prayer, then, we have help on how to pray. How to pray for ourselves. How to pray for others. Do you pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ?

What do you pray? Lord, bless them. Yes, bless them real well. Bless them. Bless this one. Bless that one. Well, that's all fine and good, but there's a better way to pray.

I sometimes wonder if the Lord is just thinking, ask me for something specific, John. Something specific.

Well, here, the Apostle Paul gives us four specific things that he prays for others. And in so doing, it becomes instructed to us on how to pray for ourselves and how to pray for the saints in Christ Jesus.

Now, before we dive into his prayer, I want to note several points by way of introduction. And the first is that Paul's prayer is the result of his love.

[4:02] Verse 8, God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus, and this is my prayer. You see, his prayer was driven by love.

His heart longs for them with the affection of Christ. And how does that love express itself? It pours itself out for them in intercessory prayer.

And if you love someone, you will pray for them. Have you thought of the connection between love and prayer? Jesus drew that connection in the Sermon on the Mount when he tells us, Love your

enemies.

Pray for those who spitefully use you. You see the connection? Even for your enemies. Love them. Pray for them. And here Paul says the same.

It's his love for the saints that causes his prayers to run out for them. That means that our failures in intercessory prayer for the saints are really at bottom of failure in the department of love.

[5:18] We are not loving one another as we ought because true love will pour itself out in prayer. How we need more of that kind of love. For one another.

That would drive us to the throne of grace with petitions on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Christ. How would your love for the saints be measured if it was measured by your prayers for them?

We see the apostle. His affection in love. Expressing itself in prayer. That's the first introductory remark. The second is that Paul tells them he is praying for them.

He tells the Philippian saints that he's praying for them. You say, that's obvious. Yes, it is. It's very simple. And yet it's important. Do you tell your brothers and sisters that you are praying for them? I know a few things that are more encouraging to me than to hear people say to me, John, I'm praying for you. And sometimes you might think that's a little thing.

[6:26] But the reality is, you couldn't do anything bigger than that. Than to mention my poor name before the throne that rules the universe. And to plead my cause there before Him who holds my life and all my ways in His hands.

You couldn't do anything better than to pray for me. And so if you love someone, you will pray for them. And if you want to encourage them, you will tell them that you're praying for them.

Paul treasured the prayers of the saints. He prized them. They were his gold. He doesn't write letters to churches saying, give to me.

But he does write letters to churches saying, pray for me. It was better than gold. It's what he prized more than anything else.

So, encourage one another by telling each other that you're praying for them. And then thirdly, Paul goes one step further.

[7:29] He actually tells them what he is praying for them. He actually specifies to them what he's praying. And this isn't unique to the Philippian letter. It's something Paul does in many of his letters.

He includes in it what he's praying for them. Now, he would say, he would not only say, I'm praying for you, but when I pray for you and when I think of you and bring you before the throne of grace, after I have given God thanks for you, this is what I ask for you.

Now, why does he do that? Well, it serves as an indirect exhortation to them. Is this thing that Paul is praying for me so important to him that he takes this matter to God in prayer for me?

Well, then I ought to give it my prayerful concern. That's something I ought to be pursuing and praying for. And so, it becomes a roundabout way to urge the Philippians to these four things that he's praying for them.

So, with those introductory remarks behind us, we now come to the four things prayed for. And no doubt, the specific situation in the church at Philippi warranted or called forth these four things that he prays for.

[8:50] But you know what I found as I studied them? That there are four things that I need. That I need you to pray for me for. That these are four things that our church, Grace Fellowship Church, needs.

That though 2,000 years separates us from this prayer of the Apostle Paul for these Philippian saints, there is nothing that he prays for in them that we do not need.

They dressed a little different. They lived in houses that were decorated a little differently. They drove different or had different forms of transportation. or transportation. But at heart, their needs were the same as ours.

And so this prayer of Paul becomes instructive to us. Let us prize these four things then as important. Let us desire them. Let us pray for them for ourselves and for each other.

And let us pursue them in dependence upon God and for His glory. When I pray for you, I ask God for love, number one.

[9:56] Notice it. Verse 9, And this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more. Now, though this reference to love could include love for God, I believe that its primary reference in his prayer here is for one another.

It could be a possible hint of some deficiencies of love in this congregation. Indeed, the whole letter is full of such hints that they need greater humility and service to one another and deference to one another and greater unity as we'll see in chapter 2.

That they need to stop complaining and arguing with each other and those two women that he'll get to in chapter 4 that they need to agree and get along in the Lord together.

And so, there is this hint of a need for more love and perhaps it's found right here in Paul's prayer that that's why he's praying for that front and center for them.

But whatever the problems were at Philippi, they can be boiled down then to this deficiency in love.

And so, this is my prayer that your love would abound more and more.

[11 : 15] After all, the entire law is summed up in a single command Paul writes in Galatians chapter 5. Love your enemy as yourself. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

He who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. So, above all, I need love. Without love, I am nothing, Paul would say in 1 Corinthians 13.

Without love, my spiritual gifts, however grand they may be, all of my good works are worth nothing without love.

And what did Jesus tell us is the greatest commandment of all? But to love the Lord our God with all of our heart and soul and mind and strength. And the second is like it, to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Love. The greatest need that I have in my life. The greatest need that Grace Fellowship has in its corporate life. After love to God is to love one another.

[12 : 17] To be a people who love others. No wonder it's the first thing he prays for when he thinks of the Philippians. And notice it's not just the presence of love that he prays for, but the increase of love.

that your love may abound. That word means overflow. It might run over. You stick a running hose in a bucket and you walk away and you come back and you find the water running over in every direction.

That's how Paul prays for these people. That your love might be like that. Running over. Not just present, not just some water in the bucket, but actually running over on all sides.

Enriching all that it touches. That your love may abound. And then he says that your love may abound more and more.

He's heaping up words here. Not only that it would overflow, but that it would overflow in increasing measure. More and more overflow.

[13 : 26] So that the overflow would be greater and greater. That means that your love today is to exceed your love yesterday. That your love for people ought to run over more this year than it did last year.

That your love may abound more and more is his prayer. So the question is not do you possess love for the brethren? If you're a Christian, you do. Rather, the question is is your love abounding, overflowing, more and more.

What new objects of your love can you point to in this past month? People that you have loved this past month that you haven't expressed love for before.

What new expressions are there of your love? Cutting new channels to bring good to them. what new measures of your love?

More service to them. More prayers for them. More time. More money. It's prayers that we would increase and abound more and more in love.

[14 : 38] The Philippians loved each other. But their love hadn't arrived and neither has ours. Our love is often cold and formal. It's lacking. It's sporadic.

Spurious. Stagnant. Lacking in zeal. Lacking in practical expression. Lacking in perseverance.

Lacking in discernment. And so this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more.

He wrote to the Thessalonians now about brotherly love. We do not need to write to you.

Yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia.

Yet we urge you brothers to do so more and more. There it is again. More and more. So let your love be enterprising.

I challenge you before you pillow your head tonight to have laid some new plan of love. Some new plan of your love to expand and to overflow to others.

[15 : 46] So this is something that is to be prayed for. I'm going to challenge you with every one of these four. The application for the sermon today is to pray every day this week for these four things.

Why do we pray for love? Because it's not found in us. It's found in the God who is love. And so Paul's found crying out, God, teach them to love.

Amen. But our love can go badly astray unless it's guided by true knowledge and depth of insight. And so he prays in the second place for discernment. Discernment. Notice it in verses 9 and 10.

That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best.

Just as there is a zeal without knowledge, so there is a love without knowledge. And both are equally dangerous. Indiscriminate love, undistinguishing love is a formula for disaster.

[16 : 55] Blind passion can do more harm than good. So knowledge and depth of insight are like the two curbs that are needed to keep love on track.

knowledge is the knowledge of the truth. God's Word. And depth of insight. Understanding of how that truth is to be applied to my life in every situation.

An example. We have a young lady, let's say, who loves her church. She loves her church so much that she goes away to seminary to study and to become a pastor and to come back and to teach that congregation the words of God.

That's love going off the tracks. Because if she had the knowledge, the knowledge would have said, dear sister, the office of overseers for men only.

Women need not apply. There are other ways for women to glorify God and to love the brethren. Or a young Christian man loves a young lady who's not a Christian and he wants to witness to her and he marries her in the hope of winning her to Christ.

[18 : 16] That's love running off the rails, you see. And the knowledge of the truth would have kept him from such disaster. The truth that clearly teaches from 1 Corinthians 7 that he is free to marry but only in the Lord.

Only someone belonging to Christ. So there's a reason that Paul prays that they might be a people with knowledge and depth of insight.

Notice the reason. There's a so that. Why does he want them to have knowledge and depth of insight? So that you may be able to discern what is best. Paul's concern in this request is not that we would have all this Bible knowledge to win points on the next Bible quiz for our team.

His reason why he wants us to have knowledge and depth of insight is so that we might be able to live our whole lives with discernment. A people of discernment.

The two ingredients here of discernment are knowledge and depth of insight. They are what enable us to have discernment. Now that's a long word kids. Do you know what it means?

[19 : 29] Discernment. What is it? It's the ability to see things clearly. To see things as they really are and not as they appear to be. It's the ability to make right judgments about what's right and wrong, what's good and bad, what's better and best.

It's the ability to distinguish, to know the morally right thing to do, the right thing to believe in every situation.

Discernment. Now discernment is absolutely necessary in a world where everything is not as it seems. We live in a world where there are ways that seem right to a man that end in destruction. You better have discernment living in this world. We live in a world that calls evil good and good evil. That puts darkness for light and light for darkness.

That calls bittersweet and sweet bitter. All the signs have been changed. That's the world we live in. Where premarital sex is called sweet.

[20 : 43] And abstinence outside of marriage is called bitter. Where abortion is called good. And saving the lives of the unborn is called evil. Where homosexuals are praised for understanding what true love and tolerance is.

And Bible-believing Christians are called hate-mongers. That's the world we live in. And you better have discernment if you're taking steps in it. And we all are.

And on top of that we come into this world with a heart that is deceitful. A heart that doesn't know the difference between the good and the bad. In fact, a heart that's predisposed toward the evil. Would rather have the evil. Would rather have the things that God says this is bad for you. And those things that God says this is best for you we say. We have no appetite for that.

Yes, we need discernment living in such a world. Discernment in many areas. Let me just mention a few. We need discernment of character.

[21:50] Of character. People are not always what they claim to be or appear to be, are they? Not everyone out there is truly for you.

Some people are against you. And you better know the difference. Some are agents of Satan to destroy your life. To take you to hell.

And they don't come wearing red horns sticking out of their head. They might be the kid in your class that makes everybody laugh. It might be your professor at school.

In college. A teacher. It might be a friend. They appear to be harmless and friendly, but they're anything but true friends.

Elsewhere, Paul speaks of messengers of Satan masquerading as angels of light. It's Halloween night. Only it's not one night a year. It's every day, every night.

[22:55] People are wearing masks. Some who are messengers of Satan have a mask that says, I'm a messenger of God and of His light. You better know the difference.

The Lord Jesus spoke of wolves in sheep's clothing, didn't He? I mean, to look at them, it's just another sheep. But under that sheepskin is a full-fledged wolf, fangs and all, out to destroy the sheep.

And you need discernment to tell the difference. to distinguish the true character of people. Is this person helpful to me or is He not?

Is He a friend worth having or is He not? And Jesus even points this as to the way. By their fruit, you will know them.

You will distinguish them. But you need discernment, you see, to apply the test and to know the difference. There are many proverbs that would help you to identify the true fool from the true wise man because there are many professing themselves to be wise but who are foolish, Romans 1 tells us.

[24:14] It's the old trick. It's the nice-looking man who drives up with his van to the elementary school as the kids are being let out for the day.

And he's got a bag of candy and he's rolling down the window and with a smile he's inviting the children to come by his van.

He looks harmless. His intentions are anything but harmless. And the devil has a thousand variations on that theme.

That person looks like he would do me good. but he's up to no good. You'll need discernment of character.

Discernment of doctrine. There's much that goes by the name of truth today that's not truth. There are lies that are packaged as truth. The label has been changed.

[25:16] You can no longer believe the labels. They may call themselves evangelicals. That doesn't mean anything anymore. You better have discernment. They might call themselves Bible-believing Christians.

Born-again believers. And just because their books use a whole lot of Scripture references, that doesn't mean anything either. Peter says that men distort the Scriptures.

They twist it. They give it a wrong interpretation, a wrong meaning. So you better have discernment to know whether or not they're using those Scriptures in the right way.

Whether they're cutting a right course in the Word of God, rightly dividing the Word of God, or whether it's a lie packaged as the truth.

People put wrong meanings on biblical words. So we read of Robert Shuler preaching against sin and we say, wow. And then we see how he defines sin as a low self-esteem.

[26:22] As if Jesus died to save us from a low self-esteem. But that's our great problem in life. A low self-esteem. We've seen it in the Sunday school class.

Evangelicals claiming to teach that God is omniscient and then undercutting everything that they claim. If you look closely and you read between the lines even sometimes, you find that they don't believe that God knows everything infallibly.

But they claim to, they affirm to, you better have discernment in this slippery world. Many large and to all appearances thriving Christian ministries, multi-million dollar buildings and budgets and television shows and books, and they use the Bible.

people. But we need great discernment to see if they're using it correctly and whether they're teaching the whole counsel of God and not teaching a part as if it were the whole.

Very often not so much what they say as what they leave unsaid. So when Barbara Walters asked Joel Osteen, pastor of one of the largest churches in the country, why he didn't preach upon certain sins, he says that God has not called him to such a ministry but to emphasize other things.

[27:50] And we wonder where is the discernment? And we look at the auditorium, it seats something like 20,000 people packing in there, where is their discernment?

They're carrying Bibles, they hold up their Bibles, where is discernment? Hundreds of thousands watch on the television set and pour their money into what they think is the Lord's work.

We need discernment of doctrine in the world that we live in. Prove all things, hold fast to what is good. No wonder Paul prays, Lord, those saints in Philippi, give them knowledge and depth of insight so they can discern.

We need discernment of temptations. Temptation. Temptation to sin always appears to be something good.

Otherwise, no one would ever sin. Satan always packages it as something good. You go to Genesis 3 and see it with the first sin. Eve thought this was something that would increase my knowledge and make me like...

[29:01] She thought it was good when it was evil. And that's Satan's strategy. He hides the hook with the bait. You're going to need discernment to see beneath the bait and to see that shiny hook.

You need discernment in the area of temptation that sees it for what it really is, not what it appears to be. Discernment that sounds the alarm and says flee from temptation.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And could it be that the reason that so many are dancing with the devil and toying with temptations because they have no discernment.

They don't see the hook. They don't see the danger. Oh, God, give us discernment of temptation.

But there's another great need for discernment in the Christian life.

Notice what Paul says, verse 10, that you may be able to discern what is best. What is best. Not just discern the good from the bad.

[30:07] We need that. But to discern the best from the good. We need that. There's a lot of things that are in and of themselves good.

They are good things. They're not evil. They're not wicked. They're not sinful. But then there are things that are the best. The excellent is another translation.

The superior. In other words, we're talking about discernment of priority. We need to discern priorities. As I thought of these things, I thought perhaps this is where we need discernment most of all.

To discern what is best. What is the one thing needful? Mary has chosen. That better part. And it will not be denied her.

The most important needs to be discerned from the trivial. The vital thing. The thing that really matters for eternity.

[31:09] From the quickly passing temporal things that perish with the using. So our greatest problem may not be that we're given to obviously evil things, but that we are preoccupied with lesser things.

we can so easily fritter away our lives on trivial good things, leaving the best things undone. And we're slowly wasting our lives. and it's not going to be many years from now before our lives, the youngest of you, your life will be over and there will be no more opportunities for doing the best things.

May God help us. God wants us to discern what is the best. Rise up O men of God have done with what? With lesser things.

Give heart and mind and soul and strength to serve the King of Kings. The church of Christ is waiting. The world is waiting to see what would happen if a people gave up their preoccupation with the good things, the trivial good that were just swimming in and drowning in in our nation.

[32:34] To give ourselves to the most excellent things. Discernment. It's needed. And yet, sadly, it's not the strong suit in the church today, is it?

The church is largely without this ability to discern because it's largely without knowledge. There is no depth of insight because there's no depth of knowledge of God's Word.

Entertainment and other things have replaced the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Few read and study their Bibles at home. Even fewer meditate and memorize it.

So, when you're on the push and shove of life, don't expect that suddenly you'll have this rush of discernment. Not unless the mind is stocked, well stocked with those 66 books that give you the thought of God on everything that you will need to face in life and what is important for eternity. So, the church is left vulnerable to the next charlatan coming down the road, the next prophet that rises on the scene, the new doctrine, the heresy, the temptation.

[33 : 52] Each day this week, let us be praying and seeking for discernment in this world that we live in. Thirdly, he prays for purity.

Purity. Verse 10 goes on, so that you may discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the coming of Christ.

Now, those two, pure and blameless, are often found together. It will be found together later in chapter 2 and verse 15. It's found of our Savior who is blameless and pure. Hebrews chapter 7. They're nearly synonymous. And I put them together here under this heading of purity. The basic idea between pure means unmixed. We like pure maple syrup.

It simply means that it's unmixed with all the artificial flavorings and colorings and corn syrup and everything else that could be dumped into it.

[34 : 53] It's pure maple. It's what comes out of the tree. It's unmixed. It was a word that was used of precious metals. Pure gold unmixed with the baser metals.

The dross is gone. It's pure unmixed gold. And that's what Paul prays for for the saints. That our faith would be unmixed with air and that our lives would be unmixed with sin.

He wants them to be a pure loaf, uncontaminated, none of this mixture of worldliness in its thoughts and expressions, its habits, its way of living, unspotted, you see, uncorrupted by the world.

That's the word pure. And then he says, I want you to be pure and blameless, void of offense, not worthy of blame, a life that itself does not take offense and stumble and fall, but neither is it a life that causes others to stumble and fall when looking at it.

They are blameless, without fault in a crooked and perverse generation. There's no handle, as someone has said, no handle on the man by which the world can take hold of him and make an accusation that will stick.

[36 : 15] Is he sinless? Of course not. But he walks blamelessly before the world. That's what Paul praised. We would be a blameless people, but among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity.

No admixture whatsoever, or of greed because these are improper for God's holy people.

Remember what you are, Philippians, one, one, to all the saints.

Holy ones. It's only fitting that holy ones be holy, be pure, be blameless. So he's describing a holy life. An inward purity of heart expressed in an outward blameless way of life.

a holy savior is to have a holy bride. He died to make us holy.

Titus 2.14 He gave himself to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own. How important is purity to you?

[37 : 33] You know how important it is to Jesus? He took the wrath of God on Calvary's cross to purify you, to make you fit for heaven.

You know how important it is? It's one of the things that Paul prayed for when he thought of the Philippians living in this corrupt and wicked generation.

Oh God, make them pure and blameless. You can't pray for purity without rising up from your knees and waging war against your sin.

Notice he prays that we would be holy and blameless until the day of Christ. We're going to see in this letter Paul's often speaking of the day, the day, the coming day, the day of Christ, his day, the day of his return, the day of final judgment, the day when everything hidden, all the impurities hidden will be brought into the light.

And that day is to affect the way we live this day. And that's why he keeps bringing it into view that you might be holy and blameless until the day of Christ. Remember that day is coming and live now like you'll wish you had then.

[38 : 57] It's no small thing to stay pure in a filthy world. In fact, you're going to need nothing less than supernatural grace.

And that's why we're to pray for this. Why pray for it if we've got it in our back pocket? We don't have purity. We can't live a pure life in this wicked, filthy world. That's why we need to pray for it. I challenge you to pray for it daily. The psalmist has a question for you young people. How can a young man keep his way pure? That's a good question.

How? Living in a filthy world, how can a young man keep his way pure? pure? You better be asking that question, young man.

You better be asking and concerned about that question. Moral purity in a wicked world is a rare thing. And young ladies, you better be asking that question.

[39:58] How can a young lady keep her way pure? As most have lost their virginity before they get out of high school. Moms are flooding doctor's offices.

They buy birth control for their teenage daughters. How can a young woman keep herself pure? The answer is by living according to your word.

I seek you with all my heart. Do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Young people, you don't want to be any more pure than you spend time in this book.

Don't kid yourself, don't kid your parents, don't kid your pastors. You only want to be as pure as you are devouring this book. This book will either keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book. I pray that you may have knowledge and depth of insight so that you might discern what is best and be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.

[41:04] Christ. Pray every day this week for purity. And then last, he prays for fruitfulness.

Fruitfulness, verse 11, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

this is the time of year that my mailbox gets flooded with seed catalogs, garden catalogs, and they've got all the full color, glossy pictures.

There's the fruit tree with more apples than Meyer have out on their shelf with tomatoes that seem to have ten quarts on one plant, one vine.

You say, yeah, that's the kind I want. And we send away for the seeds. that's what Paul prays for the Philippian saints. That their lives would look like those pictures.

[42:09] Not just that they would have fruits, but that they would be filled with the fruit. Filled with the fruit. And it's the fruit of righteousness that he's praying for.

The fruit of the Spirit that we studied for weeks here in the adult Sunday school class. To be filled, to have our whole lives just laden down with love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and gentleness and faithfulness and self-control.

That these things would just be all over our lives. You couldn't miss them. That's what he's praying. These fruit of righteousness are the good works that God has foreordained that we should walk in them.

Works of righteousness. Obeying his righteous commandments. Doing what's right and righteous in God's eyes. That's what he's talking about. That's what he's praying.

May those people just be loaded with such fruit of obedience to Christ. It's the opposite of the fruit of the flesh that you see listed in Galatians 5.

[43:17] And by the way, it includes the three things that we've already learned that we should be praying for. Love, discernment, and purity. Those two are the fruit of righteousness. And he's praying that we'll just be loaded down with this in our lives.

Now, what kind of branch are you? How fruitful are you? You know, farmers will boast of how many bushels per acre they got of fruitfulness from that parcel of ground.

Jesus Christ, too, has an eye to the fruitfulness of his trees, his plantings of the Lord. He sees some are bearing thirty, some are bearing sixty, some are bearing a hundredfold.

What is his joy and delight in those who are filled with the fruit of righteousness? And notice the source of it all. The fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

This fruit is produced by his divine life in us. By ourselves, we're not capable of producing such fruit. John 15 5, Jesus says, I am the vine, you are the branches.

[44:32] If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, filled with fruit. But apart from me, you can do nothing.

Late in the winter, I'll get my clippers and go out and prune my fruit tree. And when I'm done, there's a whole pile of sticks on the ground. Trent knows he's got to come and pick them up.

What's the odds of one of those branches bearing fruit this summer? You say, well, absolutely not. Why not? Because they're no longer attached to the source of life-giving sap. fruit. No more can you bear fruit, be filled with fruit, unless you remain in the vine and abide in Christ and He abide in you.

And if that happens, you will bear much fruit. This stock is too rich that if you have been engrafted in as the wild olive branch that bore nothing but wild fruit, once you're grafted into this stock, you will bear much fruit for righteousness.

[45 : 44] Jesus is the source of this fruitfulness. And so it's only right that we ask Him, oh, make me a fruitful branch.

Notice the end for which He prays for fruitfulness. What's the ultimate goal, the aim of it all? To the glory and praise of God. Well, now, if that doesn't hit you in your soft spot, you're not a Christian, if what brings praise and glory to God does not turn your motors and get you excited, if that's not the thing that drives you and the thing you're interested in, the thing you're praying for and searching for, then you need to be born again.

You need a new heart that takes you off the center and what makes you to be praised and honored and you need a new focus.

The Lord Jesus. Christian, do you realize that the more fruitful you are, the more glory and praise he receives, God receives?

The more fruitful you are, the more praise and glory he gets. I'm the true vine and my father is the gardener and this is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit.

[47 : 06] fruit. Why is it to his glory? Because it will be seen. If you're laden with fruit, you that were once a wild vine, that once bore fruits of the flesh, if now your life is laden with good fruits, it will be seen.

What kind of a gardener must you have? What kind of a vine must you be attached to? You see, the reason we want to bear fruit is not so that we can say, look at me, look at me, I'm holy, I'm fruitful, but it's rather that people might say, look at him, look at the gardener, look at the vine, that John Heaney is bearing any fruit.

What a gardener, what a vine, he must be attached to. And so, it will be to the glory and praise of God that men may see your good deeds, your good fruits, and praise your Father in heaven.

Since God is the source of all righteous fruit that hangs anywhere in our lives, he alone is to receive the glory. So, here's a reason to pray for greater fruitfulness, that God may receive greater praise.

And here's a reason to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first in your life, that he may receive praise and glory. But notice that phrase stands at the end of the whole prayer, dash, to the glory and praise of God.

[48 : 41] So, this is not only the aim and reason for the last petition, I believe that it casts its shadow back on all four. Why is Paul praying for more love and discernment and purity as well as fruitfulness, that more glory and praise might come to God?

do we pray this way? Do we set it down as a reason why God should answer us, that he would receive more glory?

God, would it not be to your greater praise to make me a more loving person? Would you not be greater praise and receive more glory if grace fellowship was not more loving than even what we are?

Would you not be honored to make me a man of discernment who can discern not only right from wrong but the very best?

Would it not bring you praise Lord to make me unmixed with sin and to make me pure and blameless to make me fruitful in all the virtues of Christ?

[49 : 57] this prayer is in our Bibles to teach us to pray the man of prayer comes and says this is what I pray for you saints at Philippi and we have received this prayer now that we might learn let's take these four petitions and let's pray them every day this week for ourselves for each other for all the saints in Christ Jesus why?

that he in all things might be glorified let's talk to him and bring our prayers before him if you're lost my friend you don't have this love you still love yourself you need a new heart you don't have this discernment you're still going the way that seems right to you you've got a deceitful heart easily tricked you don't have purity you need the blood of Christ to wash you and make you pure only then will you bear fruit invite you to come to Christ even as we pray let's all pray oh our father we we

confess that we hardly know what it is to pray that we undervalue this privilege do make us people of prayer and when we come to pray would you remind us of your own words and instructions that we've heard this morning and would you hear us and answer us for the glory of your own great name seed has been sown now cause it to bear fruit we ask in Jesus name and to his praise amen may