

Sermon Handout

Laboring in Prayer

Colossians 4:12-13

- I. Prayer as work** – the example of Epaphras Col 4:12 *cf.* 1:7
 - a. Energy in prayer
 - “laboring fervently” = engaging in conflict *cf.* Lk 13:24; Col 1:29
 - Jesus in Lk 22:44 “agony” facing the decisive battle for the world’s redemption
 - b. Watchfulness in prayer Col 4:2; Mt 26:36-42
 - c. Prayer is not an exercise for the casual or faint-hearted; it is work.

- II. Penitential Prayer** – must precede petition
 - a. Sin interferes with prayer Is 59:1-2; Lk 18:18-27
 - b. Our approach to God begins with penitence Lk 18:9-14
 - Ps 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143
 - Ps 51 is the model prayer of repentance
 - c. Beware your attitude I Cor 10:12-14; 16:13; II Cor 10:5
 - Be mindful of your own relationship to Christ as you pray.

- III. Gratitude in Prayer** – an essential element Phil 4:4-7
 - a. Constancy in gratefulness I Thess 5:16-18 (Jas 1:2); Ps 118:28-29
 - b. A regular theme of the psalms *cf.* Col 3:16
 - Ps 100:4-5; 95:1-3; 9:1; 7:17

- IV. Petitions and importunity** – the core of the Christian’s prayer life
 - a. Persistence in prayer Lk 18:1-8; Job 1:1-5 *cf.* I Cor 16:13; Eph 6:18
 - b. The prayers of Epaphras
 - i. His pastoral heart of zeal 4:12a; v. 13
 - He is “of you” *see* 1:7
 - ii. That his people may “stand” in maturity and conviction v. 12b
 - That their conviction will show in all circumstances surrounding God’s will for them.
 - c. St. Paul’s prayer follows this same pattern 1:3-6, 9-14
 - i. Thanksgiving v. 3 *cf.* v. 12
 - ii. He rejoices in their love and hope vv. 4-5
 - iii. That they have understanding & wisdom in the knowledge of God v. 9
 - iv. That they walk fruitfully in good works v. 10 *cf.* Eph 2:10
 - v. That God’s strength will prevail in a patient, gracious, joyful life v. 11