

“Able to Do Far More”

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As I have gotten older I have become increasingly aware of what I will call “mildly-endearing personality peculiarities”. Said another way, I have quirks. In the interest of appropriate disclosure I won’t dig into the depths of all the ways that I am awkward and broken. They are too numerous to count. You can pray for my wife.

But one of these quirks is the way in which I will research a topic. I can go very far down rabbit holes. Sometimes this happens for necessary things. Things I need to purchase for my home or even for the church. God has called us to be good stewards, so I research and I learn everything little detail about something.

For example, when comes to the sound system that you’re hearing my voice come out of right now, did you know that most speaker systems only have a 60° angle of coverage. If you’re out of that coverage area things will sound at best weird and at worst bad. But the speakers we eventually purchased and hung up, they have a 120° horizontal angle of coverage and between the speakers on either side of the platform, everyone can hear. My researching quirk had a happy ending. The hours spent were not in vain.

My researching, my drilling into a topic, my myopic tenacity when pursuing curiosity can be helpful, but sometimes it’s not. For example, I could be eating a piece of salami and the next minute I’m on wikipedia looking up the history of cured meats and food preservation before refrigeration and then my mind wanders to “hard tack” a weird cracker that never goes bad that soldiers used to eat when traveling at sea in the 18th century and then suddenly I’m on YouTube watching a video of an 18th century reenactor doing a cooking show that’s titled “Chicken Literally Boiled in Butter”. Because apparently they used to do things like that.

Like I said pray for my wife.

This proclivity I have for knowing everything I can about a topic is useful when it done for the sake of a helpful end, and other times... I’m just staring at my phone and missing out on important things that are right in front of me. So what’s the point of my ramble?

Today, we’re taking a break from our mini sermon series about the entire story of the Bible to focus on one thing in particular: prayer. I’ve told my story about endless researching because without prayer in the life of a Christian we greatly run the risk of investing more in the research of God and theology than we do in the health of our relationship with him. We can know a lot of things about God, about the Gospel, about Jesus, but without reading the scriptures to hear from him and engaging in prayer to talk to him we cannot say we know God.

We can say that we believe in God based on what we have heard and read, but if we believe that God is who he says he is and that Jesus has bought for us with his blood unfettered access to the Father’s throne as if we were his dear children with the ability to pour out our hearts to him with no fear of being turned away. If we believed that, we would pray.

So today we are going to learn a little about how to pray, we’ll dig into what should be motivating and fueling our prayer life and we’ll consider what is the end and the purpose of prayer in the life of the church. As Jonathan read we are in the book of Ephesians. He read specifically the end of the chapter three where Paul prays for the church at Ephesus, but I actually want to read all of chapter 3. It won’t take us long but it will help us to understand what undergirds the power of prayer and how prayer reveals our relationship to God.

Ephesians 3

3 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. 8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. 13 So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Today, the big idea we'll be considering is that

Our Prayers are a Response to What we Believe About God

When we come to Pray

- 1) We Should Come with Thankfulness in the Gospel**
- 2) We Should Come to God with Our Needs and the Need of Others**
- 3) We Should Come Away Glorifying God in Faith**

Ephesians 3 opens up in an odd way. In Ephesians 3:1 Paul is about to pray and he says

Ephesians 3:1

1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

And then he stops to go off what seems like an inspired tangent only to pick up with exactly the same language later on in V. 14 which also begins with “For this reason...” What we find between the “For this reason” of v.1 and the “For this reason” of v. 14 is the basis of Paul’s relationship with God, the mystery of God’s salvation to the whole world revealed in Jesus, and the revelation that in Jesus we are not only encouraged to approach God with the same access that a child would have to their Father but also with the same boldness of a child.

Every time we come to God in prayer we bring everything we believe about him with us.

In our passage today, we see what Paul believes and what motivates and excites him. In the midst of what seems to be a tangential aside, Paul peels back the curtain on his own prayer life and lets us see where it comes from. Now, of course, the Apostle Paul is a preacher everywhere he goes. This is in fact why he is in prison at this time. But even as he spends his days as a preacher to others, we see that he has not neglected to preach to himself. So even before the words of his prayer can leave his mouth, or in this case before the words can leave his pen, he cannot help but marvel with a grateful heart at the Gospel. His prayers are a response to what he believes about God. We would do well to be like Paul.

And this is our first point.
When we come to Pray

1) We Should Come with Thankfulness in the Gospel

So using our passage as an example, what is Paul thankful for? What stirs his soul before he even begins praying?

Paul reflects on how

- 1) The mystery of God's Salvation is Revealed in Jesus
- 2) The Call of Salvation goes to Everyone
- 3) He's been called by God to help others understand the Gospel
- 4) The church, God's saved people together, is a witness to the Lord's wisdom on the earth
- 5) Being united in Christ makes us co-heirs with him

This is how Paul prepares himself to pray. How do you prepare to pray?

I understand that not much preparation is necessarily needed to pray for dinner, or to pray over our children before bed or to pray "Help!" at the instance of an emergency. But when you pray, when you decide "now I will pray", what do you do to prepare to enter into those times of communion with God? Do you do anything at all? If not, how's that working out?

I think something has happened where somewhere along the way we've been conditioned to think that it is wrong to prepare to pray. That we're not authentic unless we are spontaneous. Do you feel that? Has your understanding of prayer been shaped by a thought like that? That somehow, prayer is more powerful if we just wing it and stick our thumb in the air to see where the spiritual wind is blowing. What's funny is that without some preparation in prayer, we're most likely going to pray ourselves into boring circles where every time we pray, we're praying for the same things, in the same way, with just about the same language. So much for spontaneity! It is easy to fall into praying the same rote incantations for safety, comfort, and health each day, but eventually our own lack of engagement with the thoughtfulness of our prayers will make us tired of saying them and that makes us think that God might be tired of hearing them.

I would say that if you find prayer boring or dry, or difficult to get into, follow the example of Paul and enter into prayer with thankfulness for the Gospel. In fact, I'd encourage you to make many of your prayers to God prayers of thankful reflection about all that he has done. Our relationship to God is often characterized in the scriptures as a child/parent relationship, but it's also characterized as a husband and wife relationship. Sometimes I just tell my wife that she's beautiful. I adore her.

Believers, could you daily, thoughtfully reflect on the beauty and majesty of God and respond to that reflection with prayer? I promise, adding thoughtfulness to your prayers will not make them boring. In fact, you'll feel your heart come alive as you worship and the spirit of God within you will well up with a joy that confirms that it is good to simply be in God's presence. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Worshipful prayer is a means to that end of rest.

Again, if an idea like this is entirely new to you but you know that you want to revitalize your personal prayer life, Paul has given us a great example here in Ephesians 3. In fact the 5 things he reflects on that I mentioned earlier are not unique to Paul. They are good things for us all. So for the rest of our time in this first section, I want to use those 5 realities as a tool, along with scripture, to stir up our collective thankfulness to God.

1) The Mystery of God's Salvation is Revealed in Jesus

Growing up in church in the 90's and the early 2000's, there was a variety of *christian-esque* movements that sought to recapture authenticity in the practice of faith, by acknowledging and almost emphasizing doubt. There would be much talk about what we don't know about God. There was a seeming desire to see God as mysterious, oblique and unknowable and a hope that authentic faith would rise up out of some kind of aesthetic christian mysticism. Basically, the prevailing wisdom said that we wanted a Christianity that looked and felt a little cooler or mysterious and we wanted it to cut us a little more slack when it came to pursuing personal holiness.

The problem with this is that our faith isn't in what we don't know, it is in Christ and he himself is the answer to what was previously mysterious. Scripture affirms this over and over again.

Colossians 2:1-3

For I want you to... reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ.

Ephesians 1:9

Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ

Romans 16:25

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages

The mystery of scripture is "How will God make everything right again between us and him while still judging sin perfectly and remaining true to his character and holiness?" And the mystery revealed is that both of those seemingly incompatible goals are accomplished perfectly through the ministry and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And so we rejoice and are thankful when we pray that we don't have to dwell in mystery any more about how things can be made right. God has made them right for all who believe in Jesus Christ.

That brings us to the next thing that Paul rejoices over and that is that

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2) The Call of Salvation goes to Everyone

In **Ephesians 3:6** Paul says:

6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

As Tyler has been preaching over the last few weeks we've over and over again seen the themes of God's people, in God's place, in God's presence and for all of the Old Testament we know exactly who God's people are. They are the Jews, the Hebrews, the children of Abraham, the twelve tribes of Israel. Whether they followed closely to the commands of God or were far from him and needed correction, they were his distinct people. And yet, there were always promises that God's family would grow and that people from every nation would worship the Lord.

In **Genesis 12:3** God tells Abraham

3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Psalm 22:27

*27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.*

The mystery of God revealed in Jesus is for everyone. So as we enter into prayer, we can know that there is no one who because of their sin is too far off or too far gone to turn to Christ in faith and be saved. No one is excluded from the invitation to believe. The gospel is for everyone. We rejoice and are thankful when we pray.

The third thing that we see Paul thankful for is his ministry

3) He's been called by God to help others understand the Gospel

This is true for all of us. We do this for one another in the Church all the time. Maybe you are doing this in a discipleship group or a community group. You've taken part in a class. You're doing a book study with someone. You're helping your spouse or your kids understand the Gospel regularly. Maybe you are just thoughtfully having gospel saturated conversations with those you meet, bringing encouragement to the Christian and hope to the lost.

Paul was called to a unique ministry to preach to the gentiles at the dawn of the church age, but in Matthew 28:19 Jesus has given to all of us the meaningful work of making disciples in all nations. God has not saved us to wait around. We rejoice and are thankful when we pray because he's given us meaning and purpose and he's building his kingdom through us.

Paul then thanks God for the church

4) The church, God's saved people together, is a witness to the Lord's wisdom on the earth

In V.10 he says

Ephesians 3:10

10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

The church is unlike anything else. Joining together people from every background, ethnicity, race, creed, financial situation. Those who would be considered by the world to be something and those who would be considered to be nothing. The Church is called the body of Christ and it makes Christ visible in the world and proclaims his power over sin.

Of the Church **1 Peter 2:9-10** says

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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God's work in the world today is the salvation of sinners through faith in Christ and this is something only he can do but the Church's role in the world today in all that it does, is to faithfully share with the world the excellencies of Christ through word and deed until he returns. It is through the Church that the world hears the gospel proclaimed and sees the effects of power in the lives of its members. It is through believers, through our testimony, through our witness, through our gospel proclamation that God's is accomplishing heart-changing, sin-destroying, kingdom-building work.

So we rejoice and are thankful when we pray to be trusted with the treasure of Gospel as we bear witness to it and proclaim its power with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lastly, Paul rejoices over the reality that

5) Being united in Christ makes us co-heirs with him

In **Ephesians 3:6** Paul says

6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

In **Ephesians 3:11-12** Paul expands on what being an heir gets you.

11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. How cool is that?
In one sentence we see how Jesus changes everything between us and God.

In **1 Peter 1:3-5** Peter talks about the inheritance that is ours in Christ this way

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The mystery of the Gospel that is revealed in Jesus is that he received everything that we deserved for our sin and rebellion and we received everything that he deserved for his obedience.

Our status before God, our Father, is completely changed and instead of coming to him as enemies under his wrath, we come as children received with joy.

We rejoice and are thankful when we pray that we can always come to God as his child and be received with joy. Nothing separates us anymore.

If digging into the practice of prayer has been difficult for you, let thankful rejoicing bring you back to the Father's arms. Gaze on the beauty of his holiness and mercy and tell him today what you see. Notice the beauty of the Gospel and tell him. What you will find is that the more often you do this, it is not God who will change, it is you. Grateful wonder at the gospel is the fuel for a life of prayer and worship.

So now that, like Paul, we have warmed our hearts by the fires of the Gospel and understand the depth of the relationship and access to God that we have in Christ, what do we do? What do we do with the kind of co-heir access to God we now have where we can come to him with anything and everything with boldness and have no fear of being turned away?

This is our second point for today
When we come to Pray

2) We Should Come to God with Our Needs and the Need of Others

Let's remind ourselves of Paul's actual prayer here. Starting with his second "For this reason" in verse 14
Ephesians 3:14-19

*14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,*

*16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith*

—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

So what do we do with child like access to God?

We pray for our needs and the needs of others. We come to our Father and ask him to act and move in this world and accomplish things that we never could.

Now of course this includes acute needs. If someone is sick, we want to pray that they would be healed and feel better. If we're struggling with anxiety or depression, we should pray for relief. If we are unsure of what path to choose when it comes to work opportunities, or dating relationships, or long distance moves, we should pray for wisdom.

In general, our prayer lives are consumed with acute needs. This is the reality of life in a sinful world that is full of hardship and disappointment and we should come our Father in our time of need for help and comfort as we navigate difficulty, heartbreak and insecurity.

But there are more foundational needs than the acute ones and Paul focuses his prayer for the Ephesian church there.

Two times in this prayer, Paul prays for strength. Why does he pray that?
He prays that because he knows how weak we are.

In **Ephesians 3:16-17** he prays for the strengthening of hearts this way

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

And he prays for the strengthening of minds when he prays in v. 18-19 that we

Ephesians 3:18-19

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ultimately, Paul's prayer is that the greatest needs we have would be met. That through God's spirit and power the church might believe and have a relationship with God would grow more and more while comprehending with greater clarity and assurance the love that Christ has shown us. He prays that minds would be strengthened so that people would see the beauty of the Gospel from every angle, the breadth, length, height and depth, like a jeweler looking at a diamond.

Paul asks that the church might be "filled with all the fullness of God." This is like praying that they would be consumed with the thought in their minds and the feeling deep in their hearts that, because of what Christ has done, God really, deeply love us.

I said earlier that our prayer lives are consumed with acute needs but Paul's desire is for believers to be consumed with the unsearchable riches of Christ, the manifold wisdom of God, and the breadth, length, height, and depth of God's costly redeeming love.

I hope that one day, this will be the truth for all of us. We know that it will be for all who come into God's kingdom.

When we we pray like this for ourselves and others and God answers this prayer, we can be rooted and grounded in the knowledge of the love of Christ and be content and even grateful when God answers our acute prayers differently than we had hoped.

And God will often answer our prayers differently than we hope.

I read one theologian who wrote "Prayer gets messed up when we assume its purpose is to get God on board with us, versus the other way around."

He's not a genie granting wishes. He is God. He is not bound to us, we are bound to him. He doesn't serve our purposes, we serve his. Do you believe this?

God only answers prayers in ways that bring him glory, build his kingdom, and serve the eternal good of his children.

So what happens when we pray in ways that seek to bring ourselves glory or to build our kingdom, or bring comfort and security into our lives that God knows we are better off without?

James warns us in **James 4:3**

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Does a Father know better than his children what they need? Of course.

I am the father of three kids and what I know now is that children always want most the things that will disappoint them the quickest. They want toys with batteries that run out, video games that they'll finish in a day and never enjoy again, experiences that are not as good as advertised and foods that will make them feel sick to their stomachs.

So do you think our Heavenly Father knows better than his children what they need? Doesn't the cross prove that God loves us and that he's trustworthy when it comes to our good? Doesn't the cross also prove that when it seems like no comfort can be found and things are at their darkest that God is with us?

God always answers our prayers in the best way possible.

And so, whatever we are praying for right now, this is the best God has for us at this point. As we come to him for ourselves and others, this is an important and dear truth to hold. God always answers our prayers in the best way possible.

To deeply consider that reality is to reorient your sense of self-importance in the universe.

Simultaneously, you realize that you are not God and everything isn't about you or those you are praying for, and yet the one whom everything is about, is working all things together for good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

Paul asks in V. 19 that believers might know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. We might not know now why God has us or those we love in trying situations, but we do know that turning to him is the only safe harbor for our hopes. We don't always have the strength to comprehend this, but today we've seen that this is exactly what we should be praying for.

So let us come boldly to our Father and ask him to forgive sin, change and strengthen hearts and minds and keep us by his Spirit's power no matter the circumstance until he comes again.

Our last point for today is that when we come to Pray

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3) We Should Come Away Glorifying God in Faith

Let's see how Paul ends his prayer

Ephesians 3:20-21

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20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
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Paul ends his time in prayer glorifying God for who he is, for what he can do and for what we can trust him to do forever. He began with adoring God insight of the gospel, he entered into a time of prayer for the strength and growth of this church, and he closes by affirming his trust in God and in his power to do anything.

In all of scripture, I think that these are some of the most beautiful words that I have ever read.

That God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think according to the power at work within us. And that God's glory is found in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.

This truth, that God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think reveals itself in the gospel. None of us would have come up with the gospel as the way that God would save us. None of us could have dreamed of it. None of us would have asked for it. It seems too good to be true, and yet it is not. God has already proven that he is able to do far more than all that we ask or think. It is held out for us as an invitation even today.

If the world has left you hopeless and you know that need God to change things, he can and he will. Jesus has restored our relationship to God and today, if you believe that he died to take the penalty for your sin and you desire to turn from your sin and follow God's path instead of your own - Today could be the first day of a new life for you. Please talk to me or any of these other pastors at the end of the service today. We'd love to help you.

After considering all we've looked at today, I wonder if in our hearts we have an accurate picture of God. Do we really understand his holiness? Do we understand the offense of sin? Have we grasped what it cost Jesus to make things right? Now that he has restored our relationship to the Father do we even take advantage of what Christ purchased for us when Paul says that in Jesus "we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith"?

The good news is that we can pray to grow in our understanding of all these things. Paul did. We should pray for this because when we come to God with a right view of who he is then our personal prayer times and our times as a church in prayer together will be times of worship. We'll walk away from them in awe of God's goodness and mercy.

There is a quote from a Pastor and author named Tim Keller that has stuck with me for years. He said: "When we pray, we treat God as God."

So even the act of praying at all is an act of worship.

To pray means that you believe there is a God. That he hears you and that he can do what you cannot. That is good start.

My hope for today has been very simple: to look at this prayer of Paul's and to see it as an example of a healthy prayer life. One that comes prepared by thankfulness in the gospel, that enters into prayer with the boldness of a beloved child, that seeks the good and growth of our relationship with God and of others relationship with God as we together seek the revealing of his glory in the church. And finally to see that prayer as necessary, for without it we do not treat God as God and we are disconnecting ourselves from the power of God to do all that we cannot in our own strength.

As we begin to close I want to make a few things very practical. I have talked mostly about the broad state of the heart and mind as it relates to prayer, but I want to offer some help to those who don't know where to start and to those who want to start again. So here are 5 things I want to leave us with today.

1. Conclude your devotional time with prayer

Read then Pray. We have a reading plan that the church is going through right now available at the info desk, on our website, or through our app. If you don't have any other regular bible reading that you are doing, join us. Get into the habit of hearing from God in his word and then talking to him through prayer. Our prayers are a response to what we believe about God and as we spend time with him in his word, our picture of who he is will become more accurate and we will have more that we understand and more t

2. Talk to God

This may seem odd to include on a list, but I do think this is helpful. Many of us have only ever really prayed within the confines of our own heads. I believe you will find your times of prayer more focused and less distracted if you actually speak. Almost every prayer recorded in the Bible is a prayer that was said out loud. This doesn't mean that it's not ok to pray without speaking, I am simply sharing something that has helped me and my own distracted mind stay on track.

3. Consider a Biblical Model of Prayer

There are many prayers recorded in Scripture. I would encourage you when come across them to see what people pray for. D.A. Carson wrote a book entitled "Praying with Paul" that many of us on staff have found helpful and it walks through many of the Prayers that Paul wrote in his letters much like we did this morning. In our passage today we saw a model that begins with Worshiping God by remembering the Gospel, then Bringing our Requests to our Father, and then concluding by Glorifying God and affirming our trust in his power and eternal purposes. There are other good models in scripture everywhere, all I am encourage is that structure can be helpful when it comes to having a thriving prayer life.

4. Write things down

I am not smart enough to go to the grocery store without a list. So when it comes to praying for myself and actually praying for the needs of others, I am in need of organization. You probably are as well. In our passage today, we saw how Paul's thoughtfulness with pray when he prayed affected his prayer life. I believe it will do the same for us. Grab a small book with blank pages or a to-do app on your phone and pray on purpose with specifics. Additionally a benefit of coming to pray prepared this way, is that if you record what you are praying for you are in essence writing a journal of God faithfulness. So write things down. In just a matter of months, I believe you will be encouraged.

5. Pray with others

This is your spouse, your children or your parents, members of the church and here at church corporately. Pray with others. When we have times in prayer here and someone on the platform is praying for us corporately, agree with them in prayer. Pray what they are praying along with them. Pray with your Community group or your Discipleship group. Pray for others and let others pray for you. This is part of why Paul called the church the manifold wisdom of God. There is a powerful witness to the world when we pray together corporately and seek his glory as his people in all things.

The end of all our prayers is the glory of God, that we would be more like him and that this world would be more like his kingdom, and that we might honor the sacrifice of Christ and enjoy the benefits of a restored relationship the Father. May we persevere in prayer individually and corporately as a church because it really is for our good and God's glory. Our prayers are a response to what we believe about God and yet as we humble ourselves and meet with him in prayer we'll believe all the more.