

Sermon Title: The Picture of a Consistent Prayer Warrior

Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a prayerfully blameless life, before and at the coming of Christ.

Sermon Proposition: There are 5 aspects of a focused prayer warrior.

Introduction: It is evident by Paul's Epistles that a great deal of his time in his private life was occupied in prayer and thanksgiving to God. This section closes with a wishful desire, something to which Paul prayed to God.

"How blessed it is to hear some aged saint, who has long walked with God and enjoyed intimate communion with Him, pouring out his heart before Him in adoration and supplication. But how much more blessed should we esteem it could we have listened to the utterances of those who companied with Christ in person during the days when He tabernacle in this scene. And if one of the apostles were still here upon earth what a high privilege we should deem it to hear him engage in prayer! Such a high privilege that most of us would be willing to go to considerable inconvenience and to travel a long distance in order to be thus favored. And if our desire were granted, how closely we would listen to his words, how diligently we would seek to treasure them up in our memories. Well, no such inconvenience, no such journey, is required: it has pleased the Holy Spirit to record quite a number of the apostolic prayers for our instruction and satisfaction. **[Gleanings from Paul: Studies in the Prayers of the Apostle (reprint; Chicago: Moody, 1967; 1981 paperback edition), 9]**

"Certainly the apostle Paul modeled prayer to the Thessalonians. He also exemplified the pastoral prayer life once described by Charles Spurgeon: 'I take it that as a minister *he is always praying*.... He is not always in the act of prayer, but he lives in the spirit of it If you are a genuine minister of God you will stand as a priest before the Lord, spiritually wearing the ephod and the breast-plate whereon you bear the names of [your] children ... pleading for them within the veil' (Lectures to My students [reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan/ministry Resources Library, 1985], 42, 47)" **[John MacArthur, *The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Moody Press/Chicago, 2002, p. 86]**

- I. The prayer warrior's prayerful **concept**. V.11a
- II. The prayer warrior's prayerful **concern**. V.11b
- III. The prayer warrior's prayerful **compassion**. V.12
- IV. The prayer warrior's prayerful **commitment**. V.13a
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I. The prayer warrior's prayerful **concept. V.11a**

God was the object of his prayer. He is called the Father of Paul and his missionary brethren, and the Thessalonian believers. (**1 Thessalonians 3:13**)

Matthew 6:9 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Mark 14:36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*."

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

2 Thessalonians 1:1-2 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: **2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,

The Lord Jesus Christ is addressed equally with God our Father in the prayer. The fact that Jesus is God is further highlighted by Paul's use of a singular verb (translated clear or direct) with a plural subject, (He cleared the way vs They cleared or directed the way). This strongly indicates Paul's conviction about the equality and Oneness of the Father and Son. The prayer request is "to make straight the way." (2 **Thessalonians 2:16-17**)

Psalm 37:1-5 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. **2** For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. **3** Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **4** Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. **5** Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; **6** In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Paul knew that Satan had hindered the path of their return (**2:18**). Even though Timothy had visited and returned with a good report, Paul and his companions were still concerned enough to pray to God.

II. The prayer warrior's prayerful concern. V.11b

Paul was still praying to God about his concern, which was to return, with urgency to see his spiritual children again. To establish them and strengthen in love and the faith.

III. The prayer warrior's prayerful compassion. V.12

The Thessalonians were already known for their love, but Paul prayed that their love might abound – increase continuously (Pleonasai) and overflow (perisseuai) even more. (**1 Thessalonians 1:3; 3:6; 4:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4**)

With over 30 positive and negative "one anothers" in the New Testament love appears by far most frequently. (**1 Thessalonians 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3**)

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Romans 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

2 John 5 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another.

A. This is an overarching term that includes all the other "one anothers." It is a love that focuses on the believers in the church. This is a genuine Christian virtue, that all the other virtues find their source. It is the one virtue that cannot be carried to excess. It is a love that wells up within a container naturally and overflows.

Numbers 26:54 "To a large *tribe* you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small *tribe* you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them.

2 Chronicles 31:5 As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.

1 Corinthians 14:12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, *let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 8:2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

B. This is a love that overflows into the lives of all, this refers to unbelievers. In light of the fact that God loved the world and sent His Son to die for human sin (**John 3:16**), believes who were loved when they were unlovely (**Romans 5:8**), are to love unbelievers (**Matthew 5:43-44**).

1. Do this by pursuing peace concerning all mankind.

Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

2. Do this by doing good and concerning all mankind.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

3. Do this by being patient concerning all mankind.

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

4. Do this by praying for all mankind.

1 Timothy 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men,

5. Do this by showing consideration concerning all men.

Titus 3:2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

6. Do this by showing honor concerning all men.

1 Peter 2:17 Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

IV. The prayer warrior's prayerful commitment. V.13a

Paul prayed that there would be no grounds of accusation because unconfessed and unrepentant unholiness. (**1 Corinthians 1:8; 2 Corinthians 11:2**)

Romans 13:8-10 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, **26** that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, **27** that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The Thessalonians as well as all believers need strengthening by God in their inner being. The word strengthen or establish (sterizai) used also in v. 2 refers to Timothy strengthening their faith and love.

He did not pray that they would be sinlessly perfect, but blameless before God, that is after Christians sinned they would deal with it as God requires and be free from any valid charge of sin by God or their fellowman.

Holiness (hagiosyne), is referring to the condition, not the process of sanctification here. This state of being consecrated or separated to God and as a result of this relationship with God, and one another, being constantly separated from sin, this would include the separation from sinful practices that characterized the former life before Christ/salvation.

V. The prayer warrior's prayerful consummation. V.13b