

Mystery7

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- [0 : 00] I recall from Marv's message, I think two or three weeks ago, we've been dealing with prayer.
- And the scripture this morning will have a verse that was very meaningful to Marv in how we pray.
- And, you know, I think he made a comparison back to some of the prayers in the Gospels. And, of course, this is a verse that deals with prayer that Paul wrote.
- I would like you to please turn to the fourth chapter in the book of Philippians. So do note when prayer is mentioned.
- In chapter 4, we'll be looking at verses 1 through 7.
- [1 : 42] I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the Gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.
- Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord.
- Guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. And that this is the actual ultimate passage in all of Scripture for the prayer life of the believer in this day and age.
- And yet it is sad to say that the principle has escaped a great many. And as a result, I do not know of hardly any subject in the Christian community about which there is so much confusion and so much depression and so much disappointment as there is in the subject of prayer.
- It is a resource that is at the behest of every believer in Christ. Because it is when you put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that you then, for the first time, are on what we can call praying ground.
- [3 : 44] Because until that time, there is but one mediator between God and men, that is the man Christ Jesus. And it is not until we are in Christ that we are in a position to address our Heavenly Father in prayer.
- And yet it is something that, as I've said, is so confusing and so depressing to so many Christians. Perhaps the subject of unanswered prayer would rate very, very high on the list of a lot of people who name the name of Christ.
- So, barring a few, well, we'll have a few introductory comments. I call them some propositions that will run by you. We will open it for Q&A.;
- And I've been negligent in not doing that or not providing you with adequate time over the past couple of weeks. So, I want to try to make up for that today. And yet, I realize at the same time that prayer can be a sensitive subject.
- And it may very well be that some have issues with the subject of prayer. But they might be too embarrassed to ask the questions. And as the old saying goes, the only bad question is the one that didn't get asked.

[4 : 55] And you may be sure of this. If you have a question about the subject of prayer, you can be almost guaranteed that there are others who have the same question and the same issue.

So, this is your opportunity, if you will, to be a kind of a trailblazer. And they will rise up and thank you. So, you feel free to do that. We've made a distinction between the covenant that was particularly given to the nation of Israel in what is referred to as the old administration.

And we've characterized that as the administration of law as it was given under Moses. And you must understand that God had a peculiar sustained relationship with the nation of Israel that he did not have with any other nation on the face of the earth.

We are reminded in Amos chapter 3, and I think it's verse 2, where God is chiding his people Israel for their unfaithfulness to him.

And he reminds them in saying, You only, of all the nations of the earth, have I known in this special way.

[6 : 12] And what he meant by that, of course, as the text goes on to reveal, is that because Israel had this peculiar relationship with the God of creation, Israel had a burden of responsibility that other nations did not have.

They had exceptional information. They had exceptional blessing and benefit and care and provision that God had given to them that none of the other nations knew anything about.

And that made Israel all the more culpable and responsible for their idolatry and their unfaithfulness to the Lord. So, in keeping with what he provided for them, we move into the New Testament, or what is commonly referred to as the New Testament, that which involves the body of Christ that is established with Christ being the head and every believer being a member of that body.

We are under a completely different set of marching orders than what God had for Israel. And I don't think anybody would debate the distinction, at least the basic distinction that exists between the Old and the New.

And what we are suggesting is that there is a radical update that needs to be taken into consideration between God's dealings with Israel in the Old Testament and God's dealings with believers in the body of Christ today, which is an entirely different entity.

[7 : 45] In fact, they are so different, they are so radically different, that when the Apostle Paul came on the scene and began preaching this truth about Jew and Gentile being together, comprising one new body, one new entity, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female, there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, those barriers are gone.

The whole concept was met with violent opposition, so much so that the Apostle Paul's life was threatened numbers of times.

He was beaten, stoned, and imprisoned simply for preaching that message. And I am of the opinion that the distinction between these two concepts has not been sufficiently made today, and this is one of the reasons there is so much confusion and so much division in what is referred to as Christendom.

And with that having been said, I'm going to just open it for any comments or questions you may have regarding the subject of prayer. Do we have a roving mic? Okay? And a young pair of legs back there that we'll see that it gets around.

And if you have a comment or a question you'd like to offer, we would be delighted to hear from you. We'll do our best to provide an answer. This passage in Philippians 4 that Gary read is worthy of some expression as well, and we'll provide it some, depending on the questions and comments that you have.

[9 : 22] Anybody first? All right. I guess that my question, and then I'm going to clarify a word in the question.

My question is, does God hear or answer the prayers of the lost? And then, of course, he hears in that he knows what the lost is saying, but usually when we say God hears something, we mean something more than just that he hears the words.

And so you talked about being on praying ground, and that's what kind of stimulated that question in my mind. It seems like in the Old Testament, he does hear some of the times when people cry out to him for help, and yet they're not his people.

And so I don't know how to think of that in terms of New Testament body of Christ, salvation, and Old Testament people that were his people and people that weren't his people. Okay.

Thank you. I'm thinking of Acts chapter 9, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and it is interesting when the Lord tells, if you want to turn to that in Acts 9 at Saul's conversion, I'm not completely certain when it was that Paul came to faith.

[10 : 55] I guess I've, you know, years ago I used to be very sure of these things, but it's amazing how as you grow older you become less and less sure of some of the things you used to know for certain.

It was generally assumed that Paul's conversion took place on the Damascus Road. I no longer particularly buy that. I think that there's no question that he was arrested, if you will, on the road to Damascus.

And they led him, after the Lord blinded him with the dazzling light, they led him by the hand into the city of Damascus, and he is receiving lodging at the house of one by the name of Judas, not to be confused with the one that betrayed our Lord.

And Judas lived on the street called Straight. And apparently those who led Saul there took him to that particular place, and it was kind of like a shelter, call it a bed and breakfast, if you will.

And he is there not eating or not drinking anything for three days. The man is in shock. What is he in shock about? Well, he's in shock because he'd seen this vision of the risen Christ communicating to him, and informing him that he is very much alive, that he is indeed risen from the dead, and that he is challenging and calling the one who was the chief persecutor of those who had believed in Christ.

[12 : 32] And we are told that in verse 10 of Acts chapter 9, that there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias, and he said, Behold, here I am, Lord.

And the Lord said to him, Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas, for a man from Tarsus named Saul.

For behold, he is praying. What do you think he was praying about? Well, it isn't hard to put that together.

If you'd seen this tremendous vision, and he had gotten the message about Jesus being the one that he was persecuting, and he referred to himself as, If you persecute those who are my followers who are persecuting me, that was the concept, the idea.

And Saul is just absolutely stunned. He's blind. He's confused. And he's led by the hand into Damascus.

[13 : 39] And they situate him in the home of this individual named Judas. And Saul of Tarsus is sitting there at a table, not eating anything, not drinking anything.

I can see him in my mind's eye. His head is in his hands like this. And he is reliving over and over again that vision that he saw and the voice that he heard.

And he's asking himself, Did that really happen? Is this for real? Was I dreaming? Was I imagining? But did this really happen?

But he had witnesses with him. They did not hear the message, but they heard a voice from heaven. And they were not blinded by the light, but Saul was. So he's got someone to bear witness to what he saw.

No, he wasn't out of his mind. There was this voice from heaven. There was the light. And he's trying to process all of this information. And it is my opinion, and that's all it is, is just a wise man opinion, that while he was sitting there at that table for three days, and three nights, playing this over and over again, what does it mean?

[14 : 53] What am I to do? I cannot help but believe that it was then and there, at that table, during those three days, that he really came to faith.

He's putting all of this together. The confusion is beginning to clear. And he has to say to himself things like this, you know, I was really, really wrong.

Jesus really is Israel's Messiah. Israel really did crucify him.

He really did rise from the dead. He is alive. Stephen, Stephen, whose execution I witnessed and encouraged them to throw the stones that broke the bones of his body and took his life.

Stephen was right. It was all true. I was all wrong. How could that be?

[16 : 12] I can't believe it. And over and over again. And finally, he has to embrace the reality. That's exactly what happened.

And then and there is when I think he came to faith. He said, as much as put it all together, and he concluded, that's the truth.

That's the way it is. I have been an unbeliever and I have to completely reverse myself. And he prayed.

That's what the text says. Go. For behold, he's praying. I suspect, and I don't know this, I can't be sure of the time frame, but I suspect that he didn't come to that until maybe the end of those three days.

And he's wrestling. He's struggling. He's going back and forth. He's conflicted. He's confused. He's upset. He feels guilty. He's got all of these emotions. And he relives, he relives the stoning of Stephen where the most august, austere individuals in all of the land of Israel comprised of the Sanhedrin, the council, the leading Jewish men in the community banded themselves together and they dragged Stephen out of the city.

[17 : 44] Of course, it wouldn't be appropriate to stone someone to death inside the city walls. So we take him outside the city and execute him just like they took Jesus outside the city and executed him on Golgotha.

So they take Stephen out and you've got all of these men. We don't know how many there were that were present, but the Sanhedrin or the council was made up of 70 individuals and the high priest was the 71st.

He presided over the council and all of these men in their finery, in their garb, in their robes and all the rest of it are physically manhandling Stephen, pushing, shoving him, dragging him outside the city to where they find the stoning pit and they throw him down in the stoning pit and the men start taking off their robes and Saul of Tarsus says, here, let me hold your robes and he goes around and collects so these men, these old men, most of them, well, depends on what you're comparing old with, most of these men were probably in their 40s, 50s, 60s and they're going to go and pick up stones and rain stones down on the body of Stephen until he's dead and Saul is reliving that.

He egged them on, he approved it, he held their garments and now, all of these memories come flooding back and all of the times that he had been ravaging the church of God, rounding up people who believed that Jesus was the Messiah and by the way, these were all Jews.

What we've got is Jews persecuting Jews. He's rounding them up, dragging them off to prison, men and women, some of them are being beaten, some of them, in other words, think of it this way, Saul of Tarsus was probably our first expression of the Gestapo.

[19 : 54] Isn't that interesting? Kind of people who in Germany broke into Jewish homes in the middle of the night and carried away men and women and children to send them to death camps.

That was the ilk of Saul of Tarsus and he's reliving all of that. And do you know how it is that he came to faith? I've often said, and Paul said, that he did this thing not out, in other words, Paul says, I was not a volunteer for this job.

You know, being an apostle of the Gentiles, I want you to know this is not my idea. I didn't volunteer for this job. I was drafted. And he was. God called him to himself, drafted him on the road to Damascus.

And when, when there in the house of Judas, during those three days and three nights, he came to the reality that it was all true and that now he had been arrested by this risen Lord and he has no alternative but to repent, that is, change his mind of all the previous positions that he held, completely reverse himself, do a 180 and he came to the conclusion, it's all true, I was all wrong, now what?

And then, he could do nothing less but to join the ranks of those whom he had been persecuting and became one of them. And at this point in time, he has absolutely no idea at all what God has in store for him.

[21 : 41] But when he calls, when God calls Ananias to go to the house of Judas and lay his hands on him and pray that he may receive his sight and the Lord told him, for I will show him what great things he must suffer.

that statement is so poignant and so packed with relative material to this whole event, he is consigning this man, if you will, to a lifetime of not only preaching the gospel but for paying a terrific price in doing so.

And do you know something? God is not going to remove the price. One would think that in order to get the best mileage and benefit out of somebody going out to proclaim that message, the least God could do is run interference for him.

Just remove all of the opposition and all the obstacles and all the people who would threaten him. Just remove, give Paul clear, smooth sailing so he can present this gospel in an unhindered fashion and more and more people would believe.

What's the point? What's the point in expecting him and assigning him to go through all these things that he must suffer? What's the point in that? And the point is simply this.

[23 : 06] God has endowed humanity with a thing called volition. That is, he has imparted a will to us and that will involves moral issues as well and it gives us the ability to decide between moral issues, right and wrong, good and evil, et cetera and God is not going to remove that from humanity in order to make it smooth sailing for the rest of us.

So people use the volition that they've got which consists of ignorance and arrogance and violence and opposition and God does not eliminate that from humanity but he sends those who have come to faith and have come to trust, he sends them with the gospel and he sends them right out into the midst of those kind of people.

Now that's another issue in itself, is it not? It's nothing more than a fulfillment of what Jesus told his apostles the night he was betrayed.

He gave them a heads up. He said, fellas, the time is coming when those who persecute you and those who kill you will think they are doing God a service.

As difficult as it is for us to get our brains around this, you've got to understand that when Paul or Saul of Tarsus, when he was persecuting these fellow Jews who had come to faith in Jesus as their Messiah, he was doing so in good faith.

[24 : 50] Think of that. He was doing so in good faith and he later says, I did it in ignorance and unbelief. I really thought I was right but I was really wrong.

So, wow, what a situation we have here. And then this marvelous gospel whereby God is revealed as the Redeemer through his son Jesus Christ whereby those who put their faith and trust in him receive remission of sins and eternal life.

It is the most glorious message that anyone could ever hear. And Paul is sent out to proclaim this message but it's going to be to a hostile environment and it still is.

You know, isn't it remarkable the things that are done in the name of God? Do you realize that the Spanish Inquisition was carried out in the name of God?

The Roman Catholic Church persecuted those who were unbelievers in the name of God. The Protestant Church has persecuted those in the name of God whom they felt were worthy of being persecuted.

[26 : 16] So much has been done. Do you realize that what's going on today in the world of Islam where they are putting to death infidels, anyone who is not a Muslim and will not convert to Islam is subject to death.

Do you realize they're doing it in good faith? Can that be? They really think that they are serving God and pleasing God by doing that? How is it possible that people can be so wrong about these things?

And the answer is we all come into this world with a fallen body and a fallen intellect and fallen reasoning processes and a fallen logic that allows us to assess information and reach wrong conclusions and then act upon them.

That's why information is so critical. That's why truth is so critical. That's why the Bible is so critical. So that's when I think Saul of Tarsus came to faith during those three days and three nights when he was sitting there wrestling with this and then of course everything changed.

and once he knew that then he was willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. Nothing no price was too great to pay even his own life. So other comments or questions?

[27 : 45] Otherwise we'll look at Philippians again just a little bit. anyone? Feel free. Yes. Nathan? I had a few things.

One question we talked we're talking about the difference between the age of prophecy and the current age in which we live. Are there are there certain things that you think that we should not pray for today that maybe folks you know back in Israel or whatever would have prayed for back then?

Things that we should just not pray for? Things that we should not pray for? Yeah let's let's say miracles for one example.

That was something that was you know maybe more common back then prophets and things like that. Okay. you know are those things that we should avoid? I'm not sure that I would say avoid as regards miracles I would just say this God can do because God is free within himself God can do anything he wants to do at any time in any way that he wants to do it provided it is consistent with his own character and nature.

there isn't anything that that God can do and and and we would not as some say we would not put God in a box and say well this is this is the age of grace the dispensation of grace God can't do that.

[29 : 24] Listen God can do anything he wants to do including he can miraculously heal somebody if he chooses to do so but do you know what he usually does? He usually does not heal people.

Usually when the time comes because of an illness or age or accident or something that it looks very likely that you are going to die that's probably what's going to happen.

We do know that there are instances where God in his grace is pleased to intervene and provides what cannot be called really anything else other than it's a miracle.

There are numbers of times that I think any doctor will tell you that has been practicing medicine for any length of time there are occasions that they have dealt with where they have no medical or human explanation to offer for what happened.

Perhaps for the healing of someone or the saving of the physical saving of the life of someone and they just don't see that there's any way physically humanly medically possible that this person could survive but they did.

[30 : 34] And for lack of a better term they don't know what else to call it but a miracle. I'm not prepared to say that God did intervene but I certainly can't say that he didn't. All I know is God does things according to his own will and good pleasure and whatever that is let me put it this way whatever that is is right whatever that is is best whatever that is is the ultimate and when it comes to praying for miracles or whatever all I can pray for and all I can pray about regarding issues like this that come into our lives and into the lives of people in the congregation all I can do is say Lord whatever your will is that's the ultimate that's the best why would I want anything less than that and does that cover everything yes absolutely everything it covers your life it covers your death it covers your mate it covers your family it covers your resources it covers everything is there is there any way that you can improve upon whatever the will of God is and I just

I just I have very few what I could call legitimate wants or needs or desires all I can think is Lord I don't know what would be best in this situation but whatever you think that's what I want that's what I our Lord had that same attitude he had a preference yeah he had a preference he had a preference father if there is any way that this cup can pass from me except I drink it then let's find that other way whatever that is and I would appreciate it however not my will but yours be done and a question I have to ask you is this why in the world would any Christian want anything that is contrary to what

God wants for you whether it is life or death or health or wealth or you name it how could anyone want anything other than what God wants for them no matter what it is my position is whatever God wants and has for you is the ultimate it's the best will that there can possibly be who would be foolish enough to fight that or even want to I can't imagine that and this Philippians 4 passage says be anxious for nothing which literally means don't get uptight don't get on edge for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God now Paul speaking from personal experience that's what he did and he requested that this thorn in the flesh would pass from him and you know according to him and his perspective it was a very reasonable request we don't know for sure what the thorn in the flesh was but it's very possible that it was his eyes that he had some kind of an eye condition and from a logical standpoint one can see that if his vision were improved or made would that make him more efficient more effective more whatever well it only seemed reasonable if that's what it was and

I don't know because the scriptures don't identify but when he wrote to the Galatians he closed out his epistle by reminding them and saying that when I was there with you you people you cared for me so much you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me if you could have and that kind of leads me to believe that maybe Paul had a vision problem and they were aware of it and they would have done whatever they could to restore it and Paul was grateful for that and this issue involves perspective folks and I can't tell you how important this is because perspective changes everything God has a perspective he sees the beginning from the end he sees everything in one fell swoop we see it in bits and pieces as it occurs and often we don't accurately assess what we're looking at because we don't have a full blown perspective we've got a very limited perspective so when

Paul came to God with his perspective look I've got this vision problem it affects my reading it affects this it affects that and if I didn't have this problem if you healed me from this and by the way had not God much experience in healing blind people and deaf people and lame people certainly not beyond his ability to do that and it would be so much better and I could be so much more effective if I could see better that's my perspective but God had a different perspective and when Paul realized that his perspective did not comport with God's perspective he went with God's way and the Lord says no I'm not going to take away the thorn in the flesh I'm going to give you grace to bear under it folks perspective is that's the way you see it as opposed to the way God sees it okay question over here

[36 : 41] Nathan did you have another question yeah go ahead go ahead just to follow up on what you said I think we do tend to focus as Christians more on prayers that to avoid pain and discomfort and don't really see the bigger picture that those and the Bible specifically says this that those things have value and it's hard to see in the here and now where we're at but instead of maybe focusing our prayer lives on other things and I think about you know this passage in Philippians talks about prayers of supplication and thanksgiving you know we're asking we're thanking God but we're also making our requests known to him and what are those things that we should focus on and I think about praying revelation of God's love in our hearts and the hearts of our families and those things are things that are important for us to pray for and we know that they are part of

God's will that those are the things that God wants for our lives but the other thing is is that we I think we need to be aware that if we don't ask for those things we may not get them we won't grow in that area if we don't ask for wisdom we won't grow in wisdom and we need to pray with boldness and with fervency for those things in our lives and the last question was or one of the things I wanted you to talk about I think one of the things that stymies many people in their prayer life is kind of a fatalistic view of maybe just kind of have this idea that well it doesn't really matter God's going to do what he's going to do and my prayers really aren't going to do anything in any significant way so maybe talk to that a little bit

I appreciate that and by prayer and supplication that your request be made known to God that's very legitimate we have requests we have wishes we have desires there's nothing wrong with that and we submit them to the Lord and no one is suggesting that we just take whatever comes and just say well we have let me put it this way whenever a situation comes into our life we are confronted with opportunities and responsibilities we ought to exercise whatever is required in order to fulfill our responsibilities if you've got a medical situation that needs to be addressed you need to seek the kind of medical help and support that is available rather than just well let me give you an example and this is unfortunately this has happened a number of times and it's and I don't know why it always seems to be with this particular disease but I can remember a number of cases in different states across the country where

Christian people have a child and the child is diabetic and they attend a church or they go to a prayer meeting or a revival meeting where healing is supposed to be dispensed and people go forward and they're prayed for and some are throwing away crutches and wheelchairs and all of this a lot of which is just I won't go there but anyway sometimes a little child is brought up maybe four or five years old and the complaint is that this child has type A diabetes childhood diabetes and it's a different diabetes my grandson has this it's a different diabetes that most people have type A means that your pancreas does not produce any insulin at all none so everything has to be injected in outside the body and these children sometimes have been prayed for and the healer so called has pronounced the child healed and what you need to do to demonstrate your faith as parents throw away as insulin and there have been a number of cases recorded where that has exactly been done and the child died and the parents have been arrested for the death of the child and child abuse and brought into court and a number of times they have been found guilty and their plea was of course they were just exercising faith and they were believing that

God healed them and so on and so on and the poor child died and what the healer of course comes back with is well the parents didn't have enough faith and people like that you know you just but this happens over and over again and we see this and you know more often than not it is done by sincere earnest people who really want to honor God and want to do the right thing and they want his child to be healed and they exercise faith so called but they obviously didn't have enough and the child died these are tragic tragic situations and they would never be necessary if people understood what the difference is the very thing that we're talking about now what is recorded in scripture and what is for believers today and you could say the same thing about snake handlers you know this still goes on there are places in

[42 : 45] Tennessee and Georgia where you can go if you know the right people you can go to one of these meetings where they handle snakes and everybody is amazed by it and it's taken from Mark 15 or Mark 16 and handling deadly serpents and they say well it's in the Bible and if you have enough faith to believe it then you can handle these snakes deadly rattlesnakes etc and they won't bite you but if one of them does bite you and you die it's only because you didn't have enough faith and this is the kind of thing that goes on out there today not talking about a hundred years ago I'm talking about today this kind of stuff goes on so when we have a situation that we need to address if you've got if you've got a physical malady and there is a medical remedy for it what you ought to do is you ought to consult your doctor you ought to go to the doctor if you've got a toothache for heaven's sake don't spend time praying about a toothache go to the dentist get the thing taken care of this is simply being responsible for issues that come into your life that you need to address to the extent that you are able and you do what you are able to do in the situation and seeking out the right kind of assistance and if it is beyond them and there's nothing to be done and you've acted responsibly then you just committed to the

Lord and you say if this is what God has for me if this is what's going to take me out if this is what's going to sideline me if this is what's going to put me in a wheelchair if that's God's will and I have exercised competence in addressing it and it is beyond the repair of this physical body or whatever then I just snuggle down and rest and be comfortable in the sweet will of God no matter what it is this is what he's talking about you let your request be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus to me that is traveling first class so whatever comes into our life and everything give thanks and that can mean some pretty difficult things to deal with but God is sufficient

God cares God loves you and what's more one who knew what he was talking about said in chapter eight that monumental eighth chapter of Romans for I am persuaded that neither height nor depth nor things present nor things to come none of these things can separate us from the love of God and Paul said that the sufferings of this present time and hey they can be pretty significant they can be destabilizing demoralizing depressing painful some people live with excruciating pain day in and day out the likes of which we can't identify with and Paul said the sufferings of this present time he's not denying them he's admitting them the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us can you believe that more than anything else

God wants to be believed trusted so when negative things invade your life whether it's health or wealth or circumstances or whatever it is you take the appropriate steps that you can to rectify the situation whatever it is and when you have done all that you can do responsibly you just commit the balance to the Lord for whatever because his will is all that matters and he really does know what he's doing question is can you believe that we'll take one more comment or question if there is one okay this will be our last Joe this is a comment this is a comment with what you just said about God uses us or the circumstances aren't necessarily what we think are the right circumstances or the best circumstances the Philippians the book that you're in now on in chapter 12 or verse 12 of chapter 1 it says there this is

Paul speaking now I want you to know brethren that my circumstances and he's in jail he is in prison right now Paul is right next to the palace the prison was right next to Caesar's palace yeah and he says there have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel yeah how could someone that is locked in jail in prison how could that be an advantage for him spreading the gospel yeah well what it did do he was in conjunction with all those guards that were coming and going and their families and their servants absolutely and he witnessed to all them and then they went out into their families in the world and they witnessed because they had assignments all around the kingdom so God used his imprisonment to spread the word the gospel amen all around the kingdom and that wouldn't have been done unless he'd been in prison and finally at the very closing of his letter verse 22 he says all the saints have greeted you in other words this is a closing to the

[49 : 01] Philippians in his letter he says especially those of Caesar's household well Caesar is another name for the emperor and Nero I think was the emperor he was a very very vicious emperor but even though he was under his his control he was able to worship to many people and share the gospel matter of fact he'd made many saints out of his household the people that were right there among Caesar the enemy he had made saints out of the enemy so to speak amen and it's all it's all a matter of perspective God had a perspective and Paul couldn't see how God was going to use his imprisonment but that's God's part his his description his when when the apostle said there in that in that eighth chapter again this is a this is a verse that that we all ought to really seriously deal with if a man that God used to write one-third of the New Testament who sacrificed everything and perform the labors that the apostle Paul performed on behalf of the gospel of Jesus

Christ if that man if that man was able to say we do not know how to pray as we ought what are you kidding me Paul said that writing one-third of the New Testament and he would make a statement like that we don't know how to pray as we ought what is he saying he's simply saying I am a mere human being with a very limited perspective and I don't know what the future brings and I don't know what is out there but God does know and because we have a limited perspective we don't know how to pray as we ought we just cry out to God and you know what my cry to God is whatever whatever you want whatever you want that's what I want no matter what it is because whatever you want cannot possibly be improved upon as a Christian how in the world can you lose you can't would you stand please our father we still realize that in light of what we've talked about we confess an ignorance that transcends that of the

Apostle Paul if he could say that he doesn't know certainly we don't know and there is such an enormous infinite difference between what you know and who you are and what we know and who we are how silly how arrogant of us to suggest that we in any way shape or form know something better than you rather what is for us what our future is what our needs are we don't know what tomorrow brings you are the God of eternity you know everything from the beginning to the end and you know us through and through and we want to be a people of prayer we want our prayer to be packed with praise and thanksgiving just with the knowledge and the assurance that you are the God that you are and that you are only kindly disposed toward us and whatever you allow to come into our life whether good seen as bad indifferent whatever it may be you are orchestrating and you are providing in ways that we simply do not understand we just thank you for being the

God you are and being able to do that we rest in you and we trust in your benevolent wisdom and your will for us in Christ's wonderful name amen few maps of God my friends and Lord we unionize the gentry and for you just thank you for all the doors thank you everyone