

***“In My Prayers”***  
***Romans 1:8-12***

**Introduction:**

1. Please Head Over With Me This Morning:
  - To The Book Of Romans:
    - Where We Started Our Journey:
      - Through This Letter Of The Apostle Paul:
        - At The Beginning Of The Year!
2. After Spending A Couple Of Weeks:
  - Exploring Paul’s Introduction:
    - In The First 7 Verses:
      - Which - In A Nutshell:
        - Contain The Essence Of The Letter:
          - And Even - The Essence:
            - Of The Gospel Itself!
- We Now Turn Our Attention:
  - To Some *More* Introductory Material:
    - Where Paul - As Was Often His Habit:
      - Reminds The Christians Of His Continual Thoughts And Prayers For Them!
3. Now - Even Though:
  - The Verses We Come To This Morning - Are Introductory:
    - They Are Still Very Important!
  - Because Paul - Is Trying To Get The Roman Christians:
    - To Both Hear & Feel:
      - The Throbbing Of His Heart:
        - For Them - Even Though He Had Not Yet Visited Them In Their City!
  - And He Does This:
    - By Bringing Those Roman Christians:
      - And Us - This Morning:
        - Into The “Prayer Closet” Of The Apostle Himself!
4. 1:8-12 - “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. / For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; / Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. / For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; / That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me!”
5. Now - With This Little Glimpse:
  - Into Paul’s “Prayer Closet” & Paul’s Prayer Requests:
    - I Think You Will See:
      - What The “Prayer Closet” Of Every Christian:
        - Can & Ought To Look Like!
      - And Some Of The Great Reasons Why:
        - As Believers:
          - We Need To Pursue Prayer:
            - More & More!

\* First - As We Just Read In 1:8 - Prayer Is:

1. ***Showing!***
  - Showing A Heart Of Praise & Thanksgiving:
    - To God - As Paul Does There In:
      - 1:8 - “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world!”
  - As Christians:
    - We Really Have:
      - ***So Much*** - To Thank & Praise God For:
        - Don’t We?
    - And - When You Pray:

- You Are **Showing**:
  - Your Appreciation:
    - To God - And:
  - Your Acknowledgment:
    - That He Is The Source:
      - Of All The Blessings You Have In Your Life!
- Like - The Blessing Of:
- His Caring Work!
  - Paul - "First" - Directs His Prayer & "Thanks" - Not Just:
    - **To God** - But To:
      - **"My God!"**
  - Isn't It A Great Blessing:
    - To Know That - God:
      - The God Of All Creation:
        - Is **Your** God!
  - You Can **Know** God!
    - Not Only - As Your Heavenly Father:
      - But As Your Friend!
        - And - All This Is Made Possible:
          - As Paul Adds:
  - "Through Jesus Christ!"
    - Already In This Letter:
      - Paul Refers To Jesus Christ 5 Times:
        - Because He Is The Source & Sum Of All Gospel Blessings!
  - It Is Only "Through Jesus Christ" - That:
    - You Can Know & Claim:
      - **The** God - As **Your** God!
  - And - It Is Only "Through Jesus Christ" - That:
    - You Can Have A True Heart Of Gratitude:
      - That Is The Beginning:
        - Of All True Prayer!
  - Do You Know God:
    - In This Way Today?
      - If Not - You Can! By:
        - Turning From:
          - Yourself & Sin!
        - Trusting In:
          - Jesus - Died! Rose!
  - And Then - You Can Offer:
    - True Thanksgiving:
      - Through True Prayer:
        - For The Blessing Of:
  - His Continuing Work!
    - In Paul's Prayer - He Offers **His** Thanks:
      - **To** God - For **Their** Faith!
        - And - For The World-Wide Reach:
          - Of Their Testimony!
    - You See - Even Your **Faith**:
      - Is A Gift Of God's Grace!
        - **And** - Even The **Kind** Of Faith:
          - You Have - You **Owe**:
            - To The Lord!
    - Is There Any Fervency In Your Faith?
      - Is There Any Faithfulness?
        - Psalm 118:23 - "This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes!"
      - And He Alone:
        - Deserves The Glory & The Praise & The **Thanks!**
          - Even For Your Faith!

- So - Remember:
  - Praying Is Showing!
  - Showing To The Lord:
    - A Heart Of:
      - True Praise & Thanksgiving!

\* Then - Second - We See That Praying Is:

**2. *Serving!***

- Serving The Lord & His People!
  - Even As Paul Does In:
    - 1:9 - “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers!”
  - Here - Paul Wants To Reassure The Romans:
    - That He Hasn’t Forgotten About Them!
      - Instead - They Are Constantly:
        - On His Mind:
          - And - In His Prayers!
    - And - Even Though Many Miles Separate Them:
      - He Is Still *Serving* Them:
        - By *Praying* For Them!
        - Because Prayer Is:
  - A Secret Service:
    - Before The Lord!
      - **IE:** Of More Value & Power Than Even *The* Secret Service Detail That Protects The President!
    - Because - True Prayer Is Something:
      - Works Behind The Scenes!
        - It Is Often Hidden From The Ears & Eyes Of Others!
          - And - That Is The Way It *Should* Be!
      - In Matthew 6:6 - Jesus Taught Us:
        - “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly!”
    - Paul Wants To Reassure The Romans:
      - Of His Personal & Secret Prayers For Them:
        - So - He Calls Upon God:
          - As His Witness!
      - “For God Is My Witness” - He Says!
        - The Original Order Is Even More Vivid:
          - “For My Witness Is God!”
    - No One Else:
      - May Ever Know Or See Or Hear:
        - You When You Pray!
      - But - Rest Assured:
        - God **Does** Know & See & Hear!
        - Because - To Him - It Is Also:
  - A Special Service!
    - For The Apostle Paul:
      - As Well As All Of The Other Apostles:
        - Prayer Was An Integral Part:
          - Of The Ministry Of The Gospel!
      - In 1:9 - Paul Adds - “Whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers!”
        - The Word Translated Here “Serve” Is:
          - A Word That Was Often Used:
            - For Religious Service:
              - And Acts Of Devotion & Worship!
      - And - This Is What Prayer Is!
        - It Is Service:

- And - It Is Worship:
  - To The Lord!
- This Is One Reason Why:
  - When The First Deacons Of The Church Were Selected:
    - In Acts 6:4 - The Apostles Said - “But we will give ourselves continually to *prayer*, and to the ministry of the word!”
    - Prayer Was Put First:
      - Because It Is Not Merely A Supplement To Your Service!
    - **IE**: Like A Vitamin May Be A “Supplement” To Your Meals!
  - No - Praying Is Serving!
    - Service To The Lord!
      - But Also - Service To Others!
    - You May Be Limited In Many Ways In Serving Others!
      - You May Have To Work:
        - Two Or More Jobs:
          - To Make Ends Meet!
      - You May Be A Young Mother:
        - With Your Hands Full:
          - All Throughout The Day!
      - You May Be Sick Or Weak:
        - And Unable To Serve With Your Hands:
          - The Way You Once Did!
    - But Prayer Is A Service:
      - That *Any* Christian Can Perform:
        - At *Any* Time!
- So - This Morning - *See* The Value Of Prayer!
  - Praying Is Serving!
    - And Pray For Each Other:
      - Even As Paul Did!
    - In A Thoughtful Way!
      - As Paul “Made Mention” Of Them To The Lord!
    - In A Timely Way!
      - As Paul Did - “Without Ceasing” & “Always!”
    - And - In A Tender Way!
      - As Paul Did - “In - Can Also Be Translated - *Upon* My Prayers!”
    - **IE**: Like The Altar Of Incense That Was Before The Veil In The Tabernacle & The Temple Of God! It Was A Symbol Of The Prayers Of God’s People Going Up - With The Smoke - Into Heaven Itself! As Revelation 8:4 Describes - “And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand!”
      - This Is What Paul Was Doing With Them:
        - In His Prayers! Offering Them Up:
          - In & With The Incense Of His Prayers:
            - Before The Lord!
- So - Remember:
  - Praying Is Serving!
    - Serving The Lord & His People!
      - It Is Not A Secondary Way To Serve!
        - Prayer Is A Primary Way To Serve!

\* Third - We Can See That Praying Is:

### 3. ***Submitting!***

- Submitting To The Lord And His Will!
  - Even As Paul Does In:
    - 1:10 - “Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you!”
  - With These Words:
    - The Apostle Paul:
      - Is Submitting His Plans:

- And His Requests:
  - To The Lord!
- And This Is:
  - What True Prayer:
    - Will Look Like:
      - In Your Own Life!
      - You Will:
- Submit Through Your Plea!
  - “Making Request” - Paul Says!
    - He - Just Like You & Just Like Me:
      - Had **Real** Desires!
        - And God Has Given Us Prayer:
          - To Express Those Real Desires To Him!
  - Paul’s Desire - When It Came To The Romans:
    - Was - At The End Of 1:10:
      - “To Come Unto You!”
        - Paul Wanted To:
          - See Them & Be With Them!
    - And So - He Brought His Desire:
      - To The Lord!
  - Are You Submitting:
    - Your Desires To The Lord:
      - In Prayer? But Then - You Will Also:
- Submit To **His** Plan!
  - It’s As If Paul Made His Request In This Way:
    - “Is There, Lord, In Your Will & Within Your Plan:
      - Some Way And Some Time:
        - I Can Go And Visit With:
          - The Churches In Rome?”
  - There Is Such A Tender & Humble Spirit:
    - In Those Words!
      - Because He Knew That:
        - “All His Movements Were In The Hands Of God!” (Sanday)
    - But - **There Was** A Way & A Time:
      - In God’s Will - For Paul:
        - To Visit Rome!
          - Wasn’t There!
  - The Timing May Have Been Longer:
    - Than Paul Desired - And:
      - The Path Was Certainly A Lot Rougher:
        - Than He Probably Anticipated!
          - Just Read Acts!
  - But - Ultimately:
    - His Desire **Was** Fulfilled:
      - And His Prayer **Was** Answered:
        - According To & In:
          - **The Will Of God!**
- Is This How You Approach:
  - The Throne Of Grace:
    - In Your Prayers?
      - Do You Say - Even As Jesus Taught Us:
        - Matthew 6:10 - “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven!”
  - Oh - Remember:
    - Praying Is Submitting!
      - Submitting To The Will:
        - And The Plan Of God!

\* Fourth - We Can Also See That Praying Is:

4. **Seeking!**

- In 1:11 - Paul Describes His Desire To See The Romans Even More:
  - “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established!”
    - This Was The Foundation & The Main Reason:
      - For His Prayer!
        - And - They Were More About:
          - **Them** - Than - **Him!**
  - And - **These** Are The Kinds Of Prayers That Receive Positive Answers!
    - When Your Deepest Desires & Longings:
      - Are:
- To See – Others!
  - “I Long To See You” - Paul Writes!
    - Even Though Praying Was Serving:
      - To Paul - There Was Still Something Special & Useful:
        - About Personal, Face-To-Face Ministry!
  - And So It Should Be:
    - For You & For Me!
      - Do You Have A “Longing” To See:
        - And To Be:
          - With God’s People?
    - This Is A Purpose & A Prayer:
      - That Honors The Lord!
        - Even With A “Longing” Like “New-Borns Desiring” Their Milk!
    - You Need To Realize:
      - That There **Is** Something You Miss:
        - When You Aren’t Together:
          - With God’s People!
      - **IE:** Someone Once Said - “Absence Makes The Heart Grow Fonder?” Does It? Really?  
Or Does Absence Make The Heart Go “Further!” When It Comes To The Fellowship Of  
The Church, I Fear It’s The Latter!
  - So - Your Prayers Should Also Be:
- To Serve – Others!
  - Paul Sought To:
    - “Impart – Some Spiritual Gift!”
      - Even Though Paul Was:
        - A Very Spiritually-Gifted Man:
          - With Some Very Special & Specific Gifts!
  - The “Spiritual Gift” That He Describes Here:
    - Seems To Be Something:
      - A Bit More General - Like Just:
        - **Being** A Blessing To Them!
          - By Encouraging Them!
          - By Edifying Them!
  - This Too Is A Purpose & A Prayer:
    - That Honors The Lord!
      - Lord - Help Me Find A Way:
        - To Be A Blessing - “To Someone Today!”
    - William Sanday - “The Believer In Christ Should Himself Become A Center And Abounding  
Source Of Spiritual Influence And Blessing To Others!”
  - Is This The Longing Of Your Heart:
    - And The Longing In Your Prayers?
      - It Should Also Be:
- To Strengthen – Others!
  - Whatever Gift Paul Wanted To “Impart” To Them:
    - Was - “To The End Ye May Be Established!”
      - So That Their Faith:
        - Which So Many Had Already Heard So Much About:

- Could Become Stronger!
- **IE:** And Living In Rome - They Needed This More Than Most - It Would Seem! Idolatrous Temples On Every Street! Temptations Around Every Corner! And On Top Of The Highest Hill - The Man Who Would Become One Of The Most Ruthless Persecutors Of The Church Of Jesus Christ! They Needed To Be Established! And So Do We! So Does Our Church! So Does The Church In Our Community & Country & World!
- And - All Of These Matters - Are Purposes & Prayers:
  - That Honor The Lord!
    - If Only Our Deepest Longings:
      - Were Upward & Outward:
        - Instead Of Inward:
          - We Would See More Positive Answers To Our Prayers!
  - James 4:3 - “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts!”
    - But - As The **Longing** Of Your Heart:
      - Reflects The **Will** Of The Lord:
        - What Does He Promise?
  - Matthew 7:7-8 - “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: / For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened!”
    - Remember - Praying Is Seeking!
      - So - Seek After What God Is After!
        - The Blessing Of His People!

\* Then - Fifth - We See That Praying Is:

**5. Satisfying!**

- Because Of What We Find In:
  - 1:12 - Where Paul Adds That - If & When:
    - He Makes It To Rome:
      - It Won't Be A One-Sided Fellowship!
        - No - Instead - He Writes:
  - “That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me!”
    - Personally, I Think That This “Comfort” **Is:**
      - The “Spiritual Gift” That Paul Mentioned In The Previous Verse!
  - But - It Was A Gift:
    - That They Could Give:
      - As Well! Even - To The Apostle Paul!
        - A Mutual Blessing & Encouragement & Comfort!
  - But - Since Paul Is Still:
    - In This Verse - Describing The Purpose:
      - For His Prayer:
        - To Visit Them & To See Them:
          - We Can Sense:
- Words Of Optimism!
  - It's As If Paul:
    - Is Already Anticipating:
      - God's Answer To His Prayer!
        - And - Isn't This The Way You & I Should Pray As Well?
  - James 1:5-7 - “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. / But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. / For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord!”
    - James Wrote This About Our Need For Wisdom!
      - But - It Can Certainly Apply:
        - To Our Other Needs & Prayers As Well!
  - Do You Anticipate & Expect:
    - God To Answer Your Prayer?
      - **IE:** Remember The Famous Quote Of Missionary William Carey? The First Part Tells Us To “Expect Great Things From God” – Before You Ever – “Attempt Great Things For

- God!"
- This Is What It Can Be & Should Be Like:
  - In Your "Prayer Closet" As A Christian!
    - Expectation! Anticipation!
  - But - In 1:12 - We Also Read:
- Words Of Opportunity!
  - Paul Needed The Comfort & Encouragement:
    - Of The Romans - At Least - Just As Much:
      - As The Romans Needed The Comfort & Encouragement:
        - Of The Apostle Paul!
    - This Is What Paul Was Looking Forward To:
      - And So - He Prayed To This End:
        - And For This Purpose!
          - And So Should You!
- You See - To Be Together:
  - As Christians - **Is** A Gift:
    - That Does Our Spirits Good!
      - Psalm 133:1 - "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"
        - Often - From This Psalm:
          - We Emphasize The Word: "Unity!"
        - But - I Think We Also Need To Emphasize The Words:
          - "Dwell Together!"
      - Because - When You Don't:
        - "Dwell Together" - You Will Miss Out:
          - All Too Often:
            - On This Gift!
  - Remember:
    - That Praying Is Satisfying:
      - When You Anticipate:
        - The Answers That **Will** Come:
          - From The Grace Of God!

### Conclusion:

1. When It Comes To Praying:
  - There Really Is:
    - "More Than Meets The Eye" - Or:
      - Should I Say:
        - "More Than Meets The Ear!"
    - **IE:** How Many Times Have You Heard People Mock - After A Tragedy Of Some Kind - Those Who Say - "Our Thoughts & Prayers Are With You!" Now - For Some - That Statement May Be Nothing More Than That!
      - But - For Those Who Can & Do Approach God In Prayer:
        - As Paul Did - As "My God" - And - "Through Jesus Christ" - There **Is** More Than Meets The Ear:
          - In Your Prayer!
2. Remember:
  - Praying Is:
    - Showing!
      - Showing Your Gratitude:
        - To The Lord!
    - Praying Is:
      - Serving!
        - Serving The Lord:
          - And His People!
    - Praying Is:
      - Submitting!
        - Submitting To The Will:
          - And The Plan Of The Lord!



- Praying Is:
  - Seeking!
    - Seeking “First The Kingdom Of God And His Righteousness” - And:
      - Praying To That End!
        - And:

- Praying Is:
  - Satisfying!
    - Satisfying To The Soul:
      - That Knows - That - 1 John 5:14-15 - “If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: / And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him!”

3. When Was The Last Time:
  - You Visited Your “Prayer Closet?”
    - Remember What Praying Is:
      - And Pray To The Lord - Even As Paul Did:
        - “Without Ceasing!”

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