

PRAYING PROPERLY

--2nd THESSALONIANS 1:11-12--

INTRODUCTION:

Last Sunday we covered a passage that gave us two future destinies. For unbelievers, their eternal destiny was only bad news, eternal destruction. For the believer, his eternal destiny is full of hope, when we will be glorified. Paul in the end of last week's passage assured the Thessalonians that they would be in the latter group because they had believed the preaching of the gospel.

This morning's passage is not just one of the many prayers that Paul writes in his epistles, but instead it is a prayer plan, in other words it is how he regularly prays for those who have come to salvation under his ministry. This passage teaches us how to pray properly by following Paul's example of praying for the right things with the right motives. This short section, just two verses, on prayer follows logically the previous passage on Christ's return. Our hope in Christ's return affects not only our understanding of the future but also our present living. If we are to pray properly then we must have a proper source, we must have proper requests, and we have a proper reason. Paul covers all three of these in this passage.

- I. THE PROPER SOURCE OF PRAYER (2nd Thessalonians 1:11a)
 - a. Paul understood that as the shepherd of the church in Thessalonica one of his primary responsibilities was to _____ for his flock always.
 - b. Paul prayed and asked the Lord to spiritually _____ His people. (James 5:16)
- II. THE PROPER REQUESTS TO PRAY (2nd Thessalonians 1:11b)
 - a. Paul understood the necessary elements of _____ were God's sovereign purposes, prayer, and obedience.
 - b. Paul begins his first request by writing, "...that our God will count you _____ of your calling..." (2 Thessalonians 1:11b, NASB95) (John 6:44)
 - c. God takes _____, worthy only of death and makes them worthy of His kingdom. (1 John 2:6)

- d. Second, Paul also prayed that God would _____ every desire for goodness. (Psalm 37:4; 1 John 5:14-15; Psalm 90:14)
- e. Third, Paul prays that God would fulfill or complete the work of faith He had begun in them with _____. (James 2:14-26)

III. THE PROPER REASON FOR PRAYER (2nd Thessalonians 1:12)

- a. Paul had a proper reason for praying for the Thessalonians, and it was not for them, but so the name of the Lord Jesus would be _____ in their lives. (Daniel 9:19; John 12:26)
- b. Paul closes these two verses on prayer by reminding us that the ability to glorify God comes only through the _____ of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION:

In closing this morning let me reiterate what Paul teaches us in these two verses. He is teaching us that praying for others is not for the weak-willed, because it requires commitment and dedication, and it is not easy as we lift up our brothers and sisters before the Lord. We must pray to the right source, recognizing that God is the only One that can accomplish or complete sanctification in the life of a believer, we must make the right requests, and we must pray for the right reason, that the name of the Lord Jesus would be glorified in the lives of those for whom we are praying. Are you up to the task?