

Praying for Spiritual Growth.

By Nick Bibile

Eph 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.
14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

The word wherefore or therefore comes from the context of the previous verse.

Eph 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

We studied last week that the true Christians have access to God with boldness and confidence based not on our goodness but of the Lord Jesus Christ, who being our mediator, his works, and justification through him that we have access to the Father.

Now apostle says, therefore I desire that you faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. His desire is that you faint not. The new King James says that you do not lose heart. The Greek word is ekkakeō, which means don't be weary or don't get exhausted. In today's language, to be wear out or discouraged. Who is wearing out here, is it Apostle Paul or the church, believers? Believers.

He is telling the Ephesians Church don't get discouraged and wear yourself out seeing my tribulations for you. Paul is being afflicted and persecuted as he was doing the will of God for the church, his labor for the Lord. Apostle Paul endured suffering for the sake of the believers. Then how is it that the believers were wearing out but in reality it is apostle who is being persecuted.

Some of you will not understand and many who are listening will not get it as the majority of the church has fallen into worldliness today. When one servant of God is suffering in labor on behalf of the church, will they not wear out as we are the same body in Christ?

1Co 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Philip 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

But today people don't care when they see a pastor suffering for them in labor. They are concerned more of themselves. Because the church is worldly. No compassion, no love, no pity it's just words of prayer only but no action.

2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves,

Philip 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. [\[1\]](#)

But on the other hand the true believers have real agape love and here the believers felt the suffering of Apostle Paul.

1 Pet 3:8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous*·

See Ephesians 3:13 last part. Which is your glory, meaning it benefited the believers, his labor and suffering was an honor and praise for the believers as now we can look back and praise God for Paul's labor and suffering or else we will not have one third of the New Testament?

The servants of God, true Christians will go through trials and tribulations? Why? Because they are service is opposition to the will of man.

The enemy will persecute us and the world will persecute us in all direction but we have a great Advocate and a mediator the Lord Jesus Christ and as Christians we have access to God with confidence and boldness for His glory.

Verse 14) For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostle is saying for this cause he is praying. What cause? The church, the believers are benefiting of his ministry although he is going through persecution, here we see the passion of Apostle Paul to God and to the believers.

Everything should be done in prayer. In Adam we were all under a curse but the blessing of Salvation came from Jesus Christ. Without God we cannot do anything. There are some who work in the ministry but they do it without the blessing of the Lord, without prayer.

They do it as a sacrifice to the Lord. They think if they do a little sacrifice, then I have done my part to the Lord. This is done in the flesh and not in the spirit. If you do it in the spirit then there is prayer. You can labor and toil diligently for the rest of the life but if it's not blessed by God, what good is it?

Even when you read the Bible what good is it if you don't come in the right attitude for the Lord to bless through prayer what you are reading or it will be like reading a newspaper, then you can say I did my part but you were not blessed on what you learned? What good is it if there is no purpose?

Let us see the attitude of prayer.

Bowing our knee to God is acknowledging who God is and who we are. Coming to his with prayer in humility and reverence to God always through our mediator Lord Jesus Christ. The word bow comes from the primary Greek verb **kamptō** means to bend. Bending your will to the will of God. Bending your attitude, your pride.

Psalm 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.
 7 For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,
 8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness.

I bow my knees. Not only an instruction for physical posture during prayer, but suggesting an attitude of submission, reverence, and intense passion. Bowing is done by the creature to the Creator. In bowing our knees to God we show our weakness and sinfulness.

Ezra 9: 5 And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,
 6 And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

- Acts 20: 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- 36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.
- 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him.

Eph 3:15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Paul was not teaching the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Everyone is heaven bound. Let us see the truth.

- John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.
- 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.
- 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.
- 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
- 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.
- 44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
- 45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

But in Ephesians 3:15 is referring to that through the mediation of Christ, a relationship has been constituted between Jews and Gentiles, because, by reconciling us to the Father, he has made us all one. The whole family in heaven and earth consist of the elect angels and the true believers who are in heaven and scattered all over the world.

Now what is the practical application?

We see Apostle Paul's concern and passion for the church and the believers love for Paul as they were getting worn out when they saw how he went through persecution. What do you see here? We saw previously from the believers perspective their love and compassion and unselfishness.

Philip 1:8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul had a passion and a love for the believers. He addressed those believers as his "beloved and longed-for brethren" (Phil. 4:1).

Paul was willing to be offered "on the sacrifice and service of [their] faith" (2:17). And only the Philippian believers had "shared with [him] concerning giving and receiving" (4:15), which also reveals his special bond with them. We can all learn a lesson from apostle Paul.

Also we see falling down at the feet of God in prayer. Many times we pray to God only in need. Today the blessings of prayer are focused on physical things rather than spiritual growth. Most rich will not pray as they have everything. Have you noticed in prayer meetings when we ask who need prayer, it's only the ones that are going through problems need prayer. Others who have no problems do not have any request for prayer. See how the devil has fooled many of you.

Ho 7:14 And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they

assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.

Yes, just like in Hosea's time many are praying for Physical blessings, they look holy outside but their hearts are not right as soon as they finish praying they go to their worldly ways.

Many do not care for spiritual blessings only blessings they desire are the material blessings even the unbelievers have. Many are crying out to God, bless me, in today's language what it really means is to bless their flesh but how many are crying to God asking bless my soul.

Prayer is not a work but pouring your soul to God in the spirit. When you open your soul to him you are opening all your secret and pets sins to him. Your inner thoughts and affections are poured to God.

This is the reason why many are not growing in the Lord. They are not sincere with God, they will not truly confess their sinful passions, they may do it in a generic sense saying God I am a sinner please forgive my sins but will not pour out their soul so be sincere with God and let him know everything.

Many who walk in the flesh not in the Spirit, but do they pray that they would walk in the Spirit? Many who have no wisdom, do they pray for wisdom? Many who have no love and compassion. But do they pray for love and compassion? Many who have no thirst for God, but do they pray for thirst for God?

Let me ask you a very simple question. Why did God give you eternal life?

Joh 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Do you know the only true God? To know him is to have an intimate love relationship with God. Do you have a personal intimate love relationship with God? That you love the Lord with all your soul, you communicate to him in prayer that your desire is to become more like him?

But many would say, I have no time for God. But they have time to do all their worldly things, they can watch TV with great passion but there is no passion for God.

Jonathan Edwards said, "Christ is set last and lowest in the heart of the unbeliever. He has high thought of other things, he has high thoughts of created objects and earthly enjoyments, but low thoughts of Christ." He also said the external obedience they render is but forced a feigned obedience. They have no love for him; there is no delight in feeding the soul. But the unbelievers only desire to be delivered from hell not to enjoy Christ.

This is very true. Many would become Christians so they think they can escape hell. How many are deceived by the enemy? The eternal life is to know the only true living God and have a love relationship with him, enjoy him, feeding your soul with his word and growing in him.

Then you will always not think of yourself but you will think of others, like Paul and the believers in the Ephesians church. The result is you can passionately love God and passionately pray for the others. Intercessory prayer.

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