

- Rev. Grant Mangold, Riverside Evangelical Free Church, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

PRAY TELL ?

We noted last time how the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians is much more than a missionary thank-you for their support.

As a minister of the Word of God, he so also teaches and encourages them. By application, he also teaches and encourages YOU as you read his words today.

The Philippians were not only converts to Christ, but in verses 5-6 he considers them “**partners**” in the Gospel, who together with him would receive the completion of the good work God had started in them.

In Philippians 1:8 he refers to them as fellow “**partakers**” of grace. They received God’s undeserved favor as repentant sinners, and had come to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, with His forgiveness and new life. Paul shares the Lord’s affection for them, regardless of their circumstances.

Such love will never be deserved, and that’s the point of Christ’s love for us, which we are to pass on to others.

Rather than wallow in the discomfort of his unjust imprisonment, Paul purposely focuses on the needs of the Philippians. He tells them how he prays for them with JOY. And that acrostic shows you how to experience j-o-y – by putting **J**esus first, **O**thers second, and **Y**ourself last.

Then in verses 9-11 the Apostle demonstrates what our affection and partnership should look like in terms of how we **PRAY** for one another. “Pray” simply means ask or appeal to. So when you pray, you use verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions in order to express what you ask.

Paul spells out a real life prayer for them: “**that your love may abound more and more.**” This love is not lovey-dovey feelings, but real life love. The Greek is “*agape*” which means self-sacrificing love, the kind of love God shows for everyone who is saved by believing in Jesus Christ.

Paul specifies this abounding love would grow and increase “**with knowledge and all discernment.**” Putting the interests of others ahead of your own not only brings joy, it lives out love. You do that first by knowing more about God, then by caring more about the people around you.

Jesus Himself told us “Love the LORD Your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.”

He goes on in verse 10 to ask “**that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.**” Loving God results in loving others, so you do and say wise and helpful things that encourage them to trust Christ and grow in Him the same way you are.

Your life reflects Christ as fulfill your purpose on earth so that others also come to know Jesus, who will also receive the completion of the good work begun in them by God Himself (v 6).

All this comes by reading God’s Word, the Bible, believing it, and living it. It’s in the Bible where you learn about God’s eternal holy character, His never-ending lovingkindness, and your need of His gracious provision of His only Son as your Lord and Savior.

It’s in God’s Word that you learn how to receive His grace, then live it out as Christ’s new life overflows through yours to the people around you.

Pray tell, will **YOU** do that today?

Read God’s Word. Believe it. Live it out.

And pray it into someone else’s life, as you share with them the Good News about new life in Christ.