

A Prayer for sevenfold blessings. Revd. Mike Loader, Assistant Priest

Hidden within Saint Paul's letter to the Christians at Colossae is a wonderful little prayer for blessings. Take a moment to read chapter 1 and verses 9 to 12. What do you see in this prayer?

It was clearly a prayer that Paul and his companions, particularly Timothy, prayed regularly for the Christians meeting in Colossae, 'We have not ceased to pray ...' And what was Paul and Timothy praying for them? For seven blessings.

The first blessing is to be 'filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding'. What a lovely prayer to offer up to our all hearing God and Father for our brothers and sisters. But how is that knowledge and understanding to be obtained? Well, you will all know what will be my answer by now.

It comes through reading the scriptures. The Greek word used for knowledge here has the implication of a full and accurate knowledge. Perhaps we could say that we need to be faithful to the revealed words of God as originally given in our scriptures. And that also comes through Prayer and Meditation, and through sharing the word of God with other believers.

But why do we need spiritual wisdom? In Ephesians 5 verses 15 to 19, Paul tells us that we need wisdom 'because the days are evil'. We live at a time when the commandments and statutes given to us by God for the benefit of a sound and stable society have been, and increasingly are being, undermined by deceit and human traditions. And we need understanding so that we know what should be the appropriate and correct behaviour and response for us as Christians in whatever situation we may find ourselves in.

The second blessing is that we should 'walk worthy of the Lord'. Our walk should be of concern to us as in Ephesians 4 verses 1 to 3, Paul reminds us that we have been 'called by God'. Called not only to be a people of peace, but also called to be God's 'image bearers' to the world. Now that is some calling!

And we are to walk worthy of the Lord as thirdly, 'that pleases God', and I believe that we shall be blessed as a result. We are also fourthly to 'bear fruit in every good work'. Perhaps that reminds us of what our Lord's brother James tells us in his letter (James 2v14 to 17) that 'faith without works is dead'. We know that we are not saved by doing good works, but through our faith and trust in Jesus, but that faith must also show signs of good works in our lives, as it does in many of you.

The fifth blessing we can pray for one another is that, 'We increase in the knowledge of God'. We need to pray that for each other or we shall remain immature in our Christian life and our faith will stay weak. Paul saw this in the lives of some of the Christians in Corinth (1 Cor3v2) where he could only give them 'milk not solid food', and the writer to the Hebrew Christians also takes up that thought (Heb 5v12). So we can see how important is our need to engage with the scriptures if we are to grow and become mature Christians, and to become true disciples of our Lord.

The sixth blessing that we can pray for is to be ‘strengthened with all power’. If we do not have that power, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, all our efforts will fail and we shall feel defeated. We also need the power of the Holy Spirit because Paul reminds us (Eph 6v12) that we as Christians are in a spiritual battle. Paul tells us that our lives are on the front line as we ‘struggle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world’s darkness’.

We struggle against all the deceit and evil around us, but Halleluiah, Jesus has said (John 16v33), “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” And Saint John reminds us (1 John 4v4) that ‘He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world’. ‘He’ is The Holy Spirit, who can give us the victory in any spiritual battle.

And finally, the seventh blessing we pray for is that we ‘attain steadfastness and patience’. If you are anything like me you know just how much we do indeed need patience in our lives, and that we also need to build up the steadfastness of our faith.

God is in the business of building and changing our character, changing it so that we may become like His dear Son, like our Lord Jesus Christ.

May I encourage you to pray these blessings over one another and look to see the result that it will bring.

Blessings to you all, Rev Mike.

(Based upon one of our recent zoom small group Bible studies. Please join us)