

- Good morning, everyone – and welcome back to our 2nd teaching of 2 Peter.
 - Last week was our introduction week, where we set the stage for the entire letter, and just in case you weren't here last week, I would like to touch on the introduction one more time.
 - At a high level, so that we can remain in context as we move forward. I won't spend a lot of time on this, but just run through it real quick, and of course - as usual – we started the introduction:
 - By identifying, who wrote 2 Peter.
- As I said last week – in my opinion and through my studies – Peter is the one who wrote 2 Peter – even though some have debated this question.
- Next we answered the question – when was it written – and how does it fall chronologically in the line of New Testament books written?
 - It was believed to be written by Peter – while he was staying in Rome
 - Somewhere between the early part of the 2nd Century
 - The date range being somewhere between – A.D. 67-68.
 - Most scholars agree it was the last letter written in the New Testament.
 - From here we need to ask ourselves – maybe the most important question of all, which is – who was Peter writing the letter to?
 - He was writing it to (primarily) – Gentile believer's – but also some Jews and other Christians living in or around Asia Minor – also known as Modern day turkey.
 - Then finally, what was the intent of the letter?
 - And that question – can be somewhat confusing.
- Because as with all letters or books of the Bible – they have multiple points they accomplish – But having said that they almost always begin with a main intent or objective.
 - And 2 Peter's main objective, is to encourage this group of believers to press on to Spiritual Maturity.
 - And as I said last week – I am not sure there is a more important topic facing our Christian society today than that of Spiritual Maturity.
 - What's interesting is even though Peter wrote 2 Peter with this particular group in mind:
 - He had no idea how God would use his writings 2000 years later – or for that matter how imperative that topic would become 2000 years later.
 - And this fact, once again highlights God's Sovereignty along with His plan for mankind.
 - Anyways, there's a little background on the 2 Peter – so let's press on...
- Back to our teaching of 2 Peter, last week we only completed 2 verses and I would like to re-read those verses along with verses 3&4 – as we segway back into today's teaching.
 - And here is what Peter wrote – one more time, 2 Peter 1:1-4

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

- Now - as I stated last week, there is a whole lot being said here and we are not going to re-hash all of it.
 - But I did want to hone in on verse 2 – then tie it into verses 3&4.
 - Follow with me – one more time.

2 Peter 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

- This statement is a recurring statement – one made by Paul and now by Peter as well.
 - And it often shows up as a prayer, where Paul will say – for example,
 - My prayer is that you will increase in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
 - Or – where he says, may your knowledge increase as it relates to the Will of God.
- I want to encourage you to get a Bible highlighter – and keep it with you – And every time you see anyone in scripture make that statement, or include it in a prayer – make note of it.
 - I have not done (what I would call) an exhaustive study of this statement or prayer.
 - But I will tell you I would be willing to bet it might be the most common prayer in scripture.
 - But why?
 - Because of what Peter just said in verses 3&4. Listen to it one more time:

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature,

having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

- There is a cause-and-effect process happening here:
 - Knowledge is the key.
 - That's if it is received and accepted – it is the key to changing everything in your life.
 - Think about it, the more knowledge I have of anything, or any topic the more likely I will master that topic.
 - And why is that the case?
 - Because – knowledge truly is power.
 - But only if you listen, learn, heed, and apply it.
 - It's useless outside of that process.
 - And so – everything begins and ends with knowledge.
 - And that's why the Apostles prayed this prayer for the people.
 - Because they knew the more you learn about God the more likely it is you will mature.
 - Wisdom & Knowledge coupled with application are the keys.
 - And unfortunately the Church has abandoned this the mechanism that increases knowledge:
 - Which is the exegetical teaching of God's Word, rightly dividing it – in context.
- We have however, done a fantastic job of coming up with a myriad of creative ways to introduce people to the Gospel (to lead people to Christ).
 - But from there, you're "kind of" on your own! And why is this the case?
 - Because telling people about Jesus is easy, it's real easy.
 - But maturing to a place where your life tells people about Jesus, it is difficult!
 - There is simply no short cut through the process of Spiritual Maturity:
 - "Sanctification" – it requires study – study – study and more study.
 - And as I said - it isn't quick! It takes a lot of time!
- Last week, I left you with a challenge – one that probably won't make me very popular – at least to some, but that's okay. I'm pretty much use to it by now.
 - The challenge was for you to think about how you pray – what you pray for – and then see if you can find those types of prayers in scripture.
- Now I got on this topic a few years ago as I was studying the scriptures I noticed prayers in the Bible didn't seem to be anything like the prayers we have been taught to pray.
 - So this morning, I want to do something – something I have never done before.
 - And that is I want to spend the rest of our time reading through some prayers – both from the Old Testament and the New Testament – and I want to see, if

you can find (what we will call), the common theme!

- And I would like to begin our review of prayers with the OT.
- And I am going to read from an article written by an organization called “Open the Bible!”
- Let me say I have studied their commentary thoroughly, and find them to be a trustworthy source.
- So – let's delve into some prayers of the Bible, beginning with the OT, and remember to compare what they pray to what we pray – and as I said earlier also look for the common theme in these prayers!
- Prayers of the Old Testament
- 1. *Numbers 6:24–26* – Aaron’s Priestly Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

- Ever since creation, God has wanted His people to enjoy His blessing (Genesis 1:28).
 - Sin brought the curse into the world, but God promised to bless the whole world through Abraham’s seed, a promise fully realized in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
 - When we pray this blessing for ourselves or others, we ask God to fulfill His purposes in blessing His people with His peace and presence.
- 2. Psalm 19 – David’s Prayer in Response to God’s Glorious Self-Revelation

**Keep back your servant also from willful sins.
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I will be upright.
I will be blameless and innocent
of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and
the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
Lord, my rock, and my redeemer. ([verses 13–14](#))**

- The first section of Psalm 19 (verses 1–6) praises God for revealing Himself in creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God” (verse 1).
 - The second section praises God for revealing Himself in His Word, explaining that God’s Word revives the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, and is greater than gold and sweeter than honey (verses 7–11).
 - David closes the Psalm in a surprising way: a prayer for protection against sin.
 - Just like nothing is hidden from the heat and light of the sun (verse 6), the Word of

God shines light that exposes the dark corners of our souls (verses 7–11).

- David pleads for God to help him to live a God-honoring life.
- 3. Psalm 23 – David’s Prayer for Comfort, Peace, and Trust

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. ([verses 4–6](#))

- Praying Psalm 23, one of the most beloved portions of Scripture, will comfort your heart and instill confidence in our Good Shepherd as you meditate on His gracious dealings in every area of your life.
- 4. Psalm 25 – David’s Prayer for Help, Guidance, and Forgiveness

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. ([verses 4–5](#))

- We don’t know what troubling situation drove David to pen Psalm 25.
 - We do know it involved his enemies, a need for God’s guidance, and sin in his life
- 5. Psalm 37 – David’s Prayer for When the Wicked Prosper

Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ([verses 1–4](#))

- Psalm 37 presents commands “Fret not yourself because of evil doers” (verse 1).
 - “Trust in the Lord and do good” (verse 3),
 - and “Delight yourself in the Lord” (verse 4)
 - and also provides the results of following the commands: “fret not yourself” because the wicked will “soon fade like the grass” (verse 2),
 - “Delight yourself in the Lord” and “he will give you the desires of your heart” (verse 4).
 - The Psalm repeatedly contrasts the fate of the righteous (they shall inherit the land) with that of the wicked (they will be no more).
 - Martyn Lloyd-Jones pointed to this Psalm as a key reason why he did not fear Hitler

during World War II.

- Lloyd-Jones knew that even as a wicked man spread himself like a green laurel tree, he would pass away and be no more (verses 35–36).
- 6. Psalm 42–43 – A Prayer for Hope During a Dry Season
 - If you have ever felt depressed, longing for better days when God seemed so close, this Psalm is for you.
 - The Psalmist cries out in a desert land thirsty for God (verses 1–2).
 - He is far from Jerusalem, hearing his enemies cry out “Where is your God?” (verse 3, 10),
 - and remembering the good times he had experienced with the people of God (verse 4).
 - How does the Psalmist keep from despair? By preaching this key refrain to himself:

**Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God. (42:5–6, 11; 43:5)**

- If you feel like you’re spiritually dying of thirst, take heart.
 - There is ALWAYS hope in God, our salvation.
 - When you feel depressed, preach that to yourself.
 - And cry out to God to satisfy your famished soul.
- 7. Psalm 51 – David’s Prayer for Mercy from a Broken and Sinful Heart

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! (verses 1–2)**

- David prayed this prayer after the prophet Nathan confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah.
 - (Read 2 Samuel 11–12.)
 - David knew that he sinned first against God.
 - “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (4), and casts himself on the mercy of God for mercy and a clean heart.

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.
(verses 10, 12)**

- 8. Psalm 77 – Asaph’s Lament for the Day of Trouble
 - Asaph (A-saf) opens this Psalm crying aloud to God (1).
 - “In the day of my trouble I will seek the Lord...my soul refuses to be comforted” (2).
 - Asaph (A-saf) then confesses the depth of his anguish: “I am so troubled that I cannot speak” (4).
 - Has God removed His favor, abandoned His promises, and shut up His compassion? Asaph (A-saf) wonders (7–9).
 - The turning point for Asaph comes when he takes his eyes off of his situation and sets them on the glorious works of God in the past:

I will remember the deeds of the Lord, yes, I will remember your wonders of old.
(verse 11)

- Asaph brought to mind God’s glorious work in redeeming His people from slavery in Egypt, parting the Red Sea and caring for His people in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.
 - Often during bouts with great anxiety, our heart can’t stop meditating on our anxieties.
 - What we need is a fresh perspective, a reason to worship God instead of question His goodness.
 - When you battle troubling situations, look to God’s mighty works in the past, don’t just focus on your little world.
 - Look especially to the death and resurrection of Jesus, who is a new and better Moses leading the redemption of God’s children from slavery to sin to the Promised Land of heaven (see Hebrews 3:1–6).
- 9. Proverbs 30:7–9 – Agur’s (A-gur) Prayer for Godliness and Contentment

Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

- Agur’s (A-gur) prayer—the only prayer in the book of Proverbs—is easy to miss, but packs great wisdom in only three verses.
 - Agur prays with death in mind (“deny them not to me before I die”), asking God to clear his path of any real or potential hindrance to godliness (falsehood, lying, riches, poverty) and asks for God to meet his daily needs (“feed me with the food that is needful for me”).
 - We benefit from contemplating Agur’s petitions as well as his heart: he truly desires a life of holiness that honors the name of his God.

- 10. 1 Kings 3:3–9 – Solomon’s Prayer for Wisdom
 - Early in King Solomon’s reign, God appeared to him in a dream, saying “Ask what I shall give you.” What an offer!
 - Solomon’s response reflected a heart that both knew God’s grace to his father, David, and his own desperate need:

And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people? (verses 7-9)

- The result? “It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him,

‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you’” (1 Kings 3:10–12).

- Like Solomon, we can pray for wisdom, expectant of an answer, for as

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

- Take that promise to the bank!
- 11. 1 Chronicles 4:10 – Jabez’s Prayer for Blessing and Protection

Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!” And God granted what he asked.

- The Prayer of Jabez has stirred controversy since some use it in a name-it-claim it way that aligns with the unbiblical prosperity gospel.
 - As a result, many dismiss it altogether.
 - But to dismiss it is to dismiss a prayer God wanted us to have.

- The key to praying the Prayer of Jabez is understanding its context when praying.
 - The books of Chronicles were written after Israel had returned from exile in Babylon.
 - The books' purpose was to encourage God's people that He had not abandoned them nor His promises to them.
- Thus, Jabez and his prayer reminded God's people of His grace and blessing to His people, encouraging them to believe and pray in a similar fashion.
- We pray the Prayer of Jabez when we pray not according to our fleshly desires, but rather for His purposes and glory.
 - Like all prayer, God won't always answer in the way we want.
 - We often think of blessing as the addition of material goods, whereas God may bless us by subtracting material goods to add more of Himself, the greatest blessing (Philippians 4:11-13).
- 12. 2 Chronicles 20:6-12 – Jehoshaphat's Prayer of Faith in Crisis
 - With the impending invasion of the enemy, King Jehoshaphat called upon the people of Judah to seek God.
 - Then in front of the great assembly, Jehoshaphat prayed, reminding God of His character and His promises to give Israel the land they inhabited:

“O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” (verse 12)

- God responded, “Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's” (verse 15).
 - Filled with joy at this response, the people of God worshipped by singing loudly (verses 18, 19, 22).
 - Then God gave the victory.
 - When we feel trapped in darkness, look to God in faith and ask Him to act.
 - Living by faith is like following a rope that leads us out of the darkness.
- Now – let's move to prayers in the New Testament!
- 13. Matthew 6:9-13 – Jesus's Model Prayer for His Disciples (the Lord's Prayer)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

- In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus shares a Masterclass on prayer and the Christian life in just 52 words.
 - J.I. Packer even says of the Lord's Prayer, "What it means to be a Christian is nowhere clearer than here."
 - The Lord's Prayer can also help us overcome many of our struggles in prayer.
- 14. John 17 – Jesus's High Priestly Prayer

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ([verses 20-24](#))

- Jesus' High Priestly Prayer comes right before His arrest and shows us the priorities on His heart as He anticipated the cross.
 - He prayed for Himself (1-5), His disciples (6-19), and future generations of believers (20-26).
 - Key petitions include "Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you" (verse 1),
 - "sanctify [my disciples] in the truth" (verse 17),
 - and that they "may be one" (verses 11, 22, 23).
- 15. Luke 23:34 – Jesus's Cry for the Forgiveness of His Executioners from the Cross

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

- Many in our world say, "hate your enemies and destroy their lives."
 - Jesus says, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).
 - He models this in His dying moments as He petitions God to forgive His executioners.
 - Moments later, after the death of Jesus, the earth shook.
 - The Gospel of Matthew records:

"When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'" ([Matthew 27:54](#)).

- God the Father opened the eyes of the centurion and others to see the identity of Christ, thus showing how God answered Jesus's prayer.
 - Who can you ask God to forgive?
- Prayers of the Apostle Paul
- 16. Ephesians 1:15–23 – Paul's Prayer for a Deeper Experience of the Gospel

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might. ([verses 16–19](#))

- The context helps us understand how this prayer functions in Ephesians.
 - Ephesians 1:3-14 is a glorious unpacking of so many benefits that we enjoy in Christ: every spiritual blessing, beginning with election from before the foundation of the world, adoption into God's family, forgiveness of sins, and the seal of the Holy Spirit.
 - The prayer of 1:15–23 is simply to connect the Ephesians' head knowledge of those glorious truths with their heart knowledge, their everyday life experience.
 - In verses 17–18, it says Paul wants them to have a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ and to have the eyes of their hearts enlightened to know three specific things in their everyday lives:
 - “what is the hope to which he has called you”, “what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints”, “what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe”
- 17. Ephesians 3:14–21 – Paul's Prayer for Increasing Strength and Fullness

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ([verses 14–19](#))

- John Stott provides a helpful summary of the four key petitions of this prayer:
 - “[Paul’s] prayer is like a staircase by which he ascends higher and higher in his aspiration for them... [It] has four steps whose keywords are ‘strength’ (that they might be strengthened by Christ’s indwelling through the Spirit), secondly ‘love’

(that they might be rooted and grounded in love), thirdly ‘knowledge’ (that they might know Christ’s love in all its dimensions, although it is beyond knowledge), and fourthly ‘fullness’ (that they might be filled up to the very fullness of God).”²

- Each of the four key petitions is something we need more of in our lives, and is something we can ask God for.
- After asking God for these things to be true in the lives of the Ephesian church, Paul ends his prayer in praise:

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (verses 20–21)

- 18. Romans 11:33–36 – Paul’s Doxology Extolling the Riches, Wisdom, and Knowledge of God
 - Romans 1–11 is regarded by many as the most detailed and glorious explanation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - Before transitioning to a practical application of the gospel in Romans 12–16, the apostle Paul ends his explanation of the gospel with a glorious doxology:

**Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”
 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”
 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.**

- My soul soars when I read this passage—there is no one like our God!
 - I love how verse 36 answers all of life’s biggest questions in twelve short words—For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things:
 - *Where did we come from?* God is the Maker of all things (‘from Him’).
 - *What holds the universe together?* God is the Sustainer of all things (‘through Him’).
 - *What is the purpose of life?* God is the Goal of all things (‘to Him’).
 - He alone deserves the glory forever!
- 19. Romans 15:13 – Paul’s Prayer for Joy, Peace, and Hope

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

- This short prayer of the apostle Paul is rich. We learn that the fountain of joy and peace

is our God of hope.

- This God of hope is able to give us not a little joy and peace, but all joy and peace.
- And the result of filling us with peace and joy in believing is that we abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - One gentleman said – “As my mother battled the cancer that eventually took her life, she meditated on this verse, writing it on the whiteboard of her hospital room to anchor her soul in our God of hope. Her hope has been realized, and she now enjoys all joy and peace in God’s presence. In Christ, we await the same glorious future.”
- 20. Colossians 1:9–12 – Paul’s Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

- Dr. David Garland commented on this passage in the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*:
 - “Paul describes four elements of a life that is worthy of and fully pleasing to the Lord: bearing fruit, growing in knowledge of God, being strengthened for endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks.
 - These fundamentals will fend off the harmful pressures from false teachers.”
 - Pray these petitions to ground yourself in Christ and root yourself in sound doctrine.
- 21. Philippians 1:9-11 – Paul’s Prayer for Love, Knowledge, and Discernment

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

- If you’ve ever wondered how to pray and live in confusing situations filled with divisions and relational tensions, Philippians 1:9–11 gives us an answer.
 - Paul wants the Philippians to grow in love, and for their love “to abound more and more.”
 - This love is to be accompanied by knowledge and all discernment.
 - We need to know God and His ways.
 - We also need to discern right from wrong and wisdom from folly when faced

with challenging situations.

- When God equips us with love, knowledge, and discernment, we will be “pure and blameless for the day of Christ” and “filled with the fruit of righteousness”—two glorious outcomes!
- 22. 2 Thessalonians 3:1–2 – Paul’s Prayer for Gospel Advance

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.

- If you find yourself perpetually discouraged as you think about the wicked, go on the offensive by praying for the word of the Lord to speed ahead and be honored in your life, your family, your church, your community, and among evil doers.
 - The word of God sped ahead in Paul’s life, transforming him from a violent persecutor to a gospel preacher, and sped ahead in the Thessalonian church who formerly had worshipped idols (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 2:13).
 - He can do it again!
 - Also pray on the defensive, that believers and ministry leaders would be “delivered from wicked and evil men” (verse 2) so they can continue to proclaim the gospel without hindrance.
- Other Prayers from the New Testament
- 23. Acts 4:24–30 – A Prayer for Boldness in Sharing the Gospel of Jesus
 - After preaching Jesus as the risen Messiah, Peter and John were apprehended by authorities who “charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18).
 - After their release, they gathered with their friends and prayed together. What they asked for—and didn’t ask for—might surprise you:

Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit [in Psalm 2], ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’ — for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness... (Acts 4:24–29)

- Instead of asking for freedom from continued persecution, they prayed for boldness in

sharing the gospel (see also Ephesians 6:18–20).

- God responded immediately to their prayer, “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (verse 31).
- 24. Jude 24–25 – A Doxology Praising God for His Ability to Keep Us from Stumbling

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

- Jude opens his short epistle basically saying, “This isn’t what I wanted to write.”
 - In verse 3 he explains, “I was very eager to write to you about *our common salvation*, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”
 - Internal and external threats attacked the church and lured her toward ungodliness.
 - Two key commands of the book are to “contend for the faith” (3) and “keep yourselves in the love of God” (21)—a difficult task!
- Jude closes his short epistle in praise.
 - While we labor to keep ourselves in the love of God and free from stumbling into sin, God is able to keep us.
 - As Charles Spurgeon said, “You can never make yourself faultless, but Christ can. He wants to do it: He has opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness: wash and be clean.”³
 - As you persevere in following Jesus, ask God to keep you.
 - Ask Him to present you blameless before His presence with great joy. He is able!
- And then finally – we will close with Rev. 22:20
- 25. Revelation 22:20 – The Prayer to End All Prayers

“Come, Lord Jesus!”

- There’s no better way to end this list than to share the prayer the Bible ends with: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).
 - It’s common to hear cries like “*End Injustice!*” “*End Trafficking!*” “*End Racism!*”.
 - And we as believers should agree whole-heartedly with these cries.
 - And yet, praying “Come, Lord Jesus!” raises the bar as high as possible.
 - It includes those cries and several more that are much greater: “*End sin!*” “*End all suffering!*” “*End death!*”

- Praying “Come, Lord Jesus!” asks God to end everything that makes the world broken and asks Him to make all things new.
- It’s the prayer to end all prayers because when Jesus returns, our faith will turn to sight and prayer will no longer be necessary since we will enjoy the presence of our God forever (Revelation 21:3–8).
- These are just a few prayers I pulled out from a search, but as you can see – they looking nothing like – the prayers most of us have been taught to pray.
 - Primarily because at the center of our prayers is always us or the people we love and or care about.
 - Example being –
 - Lord Heal this person
 - Fix this problem
 - Help me out – help them out
 - Generally, for reasons unrelated to God’s Will, but rather, so that I can – do away with some worldly issue or for my betterment here on this planet!
- Now, before I began reading those prayers I said I wanted to see if you could pick out the common theme?
 - And what was it?
 - It's really pretty simple
 - Whatever God does for us, it's for His Glory
 - Which means – it was all about Him and not about them, or us
 - And this makes sense, especially – when Paul and Peter call themselves bond-slaves.
 - In the world of slavery, slaves were the doers – not the director's slaves.
 - Where executors of the Masters instructions – for His purposes and His Will!
- Now am I saying don’t pray for ourselves?
 - Nope – not saying that – I am saying, when you pray for yourself begin by asking yourself the question:
 - Is what I am about to pray – will it bring Glory to God or to myself?
 - Is my prayer all about me or Him!
 - Let me give you an example of what I mean:
 - If I am diagnosed with a sickness – my prayer should be
 - Lord, if it is your will to heal me, please do so, and may my healing be for your Glory!
 - In other words, may my healing point people back to you!
- That is the sense of the prayers I have shared with you this morning, and my hope – is as always – that you may see things from an eternal perspective and not from an earthly one!

- Amen – Amen !