

The New Testament Church – Resurrection Sunday  
*Preparing for Change #3 – Fervent Prayer*  
May 5, 2024 - Pastor Paul Jehle

- I Preparing for Change – God is bringing a correction, reset, adjustment, to our nation/culture...
- A. There is great change coming and most Americans are aware something must happen...
    - 1. An economic reset is coming, and rising boldness of evil will have consequences...
    - 2. We have become so polarized, many are concerned for our nation's future
  - B. Consider what we have focused on so far...
    - 1. In the face of evil, tyranny, no justice, health care or rule of law, *the apostles focused on seeing the silver lining of God's providence and eventual triumph of God's Kingdom!*
    - 2. In the face of total polarization, male dominance and the "normalcy" of slavery, *the early church demonstrated koinania and jointly formed a deep spiritual covenant*
    - 3. Both of these elements were part of a three-part recipe for advancing the gospel...
      - a. Acts 2:42 - *steadfast apostolic doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread... prayers.*
      - b. We now address the aspect of prayer – and *this was the lifeline for the early church*
  - C. The early Church had no buildings or finances, only about 20 believers or so... and
    - 1. *In many ways, prayer is all the early church had to cultivate a heart for God and others*
    - 2. Roman religious culture had no word for religion – no coherent system of thought, belief, or practice with a clear set of views about divine beings and prescribed rituals...
    - 3. "Pagan" (one who resides in the countryside – uneducated) religion was not about belief, but *practices* – giving the gods their due – ritual actions of devotion – polytheism
    - 4. *There were gods for every municipality and family – love, war, livestock, crops, health, childbirth, and weather; gods associated with specific locations, etc.* (Ehrman, 79-80)
    - 5. To top it off, Roman "religion" was built on fear – terror of death, spells, curses, etc.

II Fervent Prayer – Acts 2:42; Matthew 6:1-13

- A. What is prayer? (v. 1-7) – prayer primarily changes us – charity and a heart change
  - 1. Prayer among the Rabbis was external, ritualistic (repetition) and passive
  - 2. Jesus said prayer is communion with God – a personal relationship (quote Tozer)
  - 3. It begins with responding by surrendering to Christ, its goal is praying without ceasing
  - 4. *Prayer is often expressing our heart to God openly and honestly* – not a laundry list of needs
  - 5. The primary purpose of prayer is to allow us to *demonstrate agape love with the right motive*
  - 6. Jesus demonstrated this when he often got alone to pray with His Father (Mark 1:35-37)
- B. Effective Prayer (v. 8-13) – prayer is a matter the priorities of our heart
  - 1. Our priorities need to be right – humility, build relationships, not primarily to get something
  - 2. One of the best ways to begin is to pray the Scriptures – find a Psalm, Proverb, or passage...
  - 3. The pattern of our prayer life – the "Lord's prayer" is a guide, but can be repeated as well
    - a. Rehearsing who God is and who we are in Christ! (Our Father, in heaven, hallowed)
    - b. Praying that His Kingdom comes – personally in us first (on earth as it is in heaven)
    - c. Submitting our needs before Him – (daily bread, deliverance from sin/devil)
- C. The Local Church – a house of prayer for all nations changes the culture around us!
  - 1. Harmony – keys to the Kingdom – "decree to God on earth as it is in heaven" – Mt. 18:19-20
  - 2. Isaiah 56:7-8 – Jesus' cleansed the temple at the beginning and end of His ministry
  - 3. Prayer and Charity heart motive – the "den of thieves" or a "house of prayer for all nations"
- D. Psalm 3 – *the glory (God) and lifter of my head (encouragement)* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 15-18 background
  - 1. Church is guilty by omission - closest to us – family betrayal – others "God is not with him"
  - 2. Absalom stole the hearts of Israel, used deception, yet David prayed in broken humility...