

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Romans 15:29–33

²⁹ But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. ³⁰ Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, ³¹ that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³² that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. ³³ Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Fellowship with God by Prayer

Main idea: Praying biblically for ministry conforms unto Christ our thoughts and feelings about ministry.

Introduction: From desire to prayer: the apostle's example to the apostle's plea.

1. The Faith of Christian Ministry. Pray Confidently.

1. Full blessing of the gospel of Christ (v29b)
2. What Christ has merited, He cannot be denied
3. What Christ has designed cannot lack His provision (cf. v14)
4. Pray (and serve!) in confidence that Christ will get His desserts/design (v29a)

2. The Foundation of Christian Ministry. Pray Trinitarianly.

1. God Himself: prayer to the Father, through the person of the Son, through the work of the Spirit (v30)
2. If you view God Himself as the supply, then you will pray
3. If you view God Himself as the supply, this will shape how you think and pray

3. The Fight of Christian Ministry. Pray for Deliverance.

1. We have many enemies, and we must name them as such. 8:1–14 named the flesh as an enemy. We know, of course, that Satan is an enemy (cf. 16:20). But there are real human enemies too.
2. The fight, the battle, is real. Even while we long for their salvation (cf. 9:1–3, 10:1), we must recognize their enmity (cf. 11:28) and pray for deliverance (v31a).

4. The Favor of the Christian Ministry. Pray for the Saints' Joy.

1. Praying for the saints' delight in his coming to minister at Jerusalem (v31b).
 2. Praying for his own delight in coming to minister at Rome (v32a).
 3. Praying for their delight together (v32b).
 4. As we do that which pleases God, we ought to seek to find it pleasing ourselves (cf. 12:1–2).
5. **The Fellowship of the Christian Ministry. Pray in and for Communion with God.**
1. v33 is both benediction and prayer.
 2. He prays God's fellowship with them in their praying (and all of life).
 3. Ministry isn't just for God, and in dependence upon Him, but in fellowship with Him. It is those who already have His peace, enjoying His peace with them while they seek to be used by Him to bring others into that peace.
 4. The more you enjoy the fellowship of the God of peace, even as you pray, the more your praying will resonate with His own will.

Conclusion: There is much to be learned not only from Scripture examples of prayer, but by the praying itself. Give yourself especially to prayer for the work of the kingdom, and thus seek the grace of the Triune God via this means of His grace.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 15 verses 29-33. These are God's words. But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing. Of the gospel of Christ. Now, I beg you Brethren. Through the Lord, Jesus Christ and through.

The love of the spirit that you strive together with me. In prayers to God for me. That I may be delivered from those in Judea. Who do not believe. And that my service for Jerusalem. May be acceptable to the Saints. That I may come to you with. By the will of God.

And maybe refreshed together with you. Now, the God of Peace be with you all. Amen.

So in last week's portion we heard about Christ. Well, Christ's desire to send, Paul to Rome. But we heard last week about Paul's desire. To come and Minister. And the way that desire was

shaped in his heart Desiring to see the fruit of the Salvation of Christ being worked out in the people of Christ and multiplied, as he applies that salvation to more and more of those for whom he has died.

Well, now the Apostle is Shifting a little bit in the way that he writes coming especially into verses 33 through 32. Uh, praying this prayer. He expresses his desires. He gives them. A prayer request as it were. Uh, that is something that he himself is already praying. So he says, in verse 30 that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.

In other words, he is showing how he how someone who desires what he desires by God's grace by the Holy Spirit, how he prays and that's helpful to us. One of the difficulties in the Christian Life is prayer we come near to the Living God We find that. Our weakness and our shortcoming is all the more painfully evident we.

We operate in our general life. Usually kind of blissfully unaware. Of how weak and how much we need our thoughts shaped correctly and our affections, uh, to To go out in the right manner to respond in the right way and then we come to pray. And we realize, Just how far far we false worked.

And so it's a great help here. That the Apostle having spoken the way he has in the prior passage now gives this prayer request and tells us that this is how he prays. That you strive together with me in prayers to God. He says, this is something that the Apostle Paul does on a number of occasions in particular, Perhaps in his letter to the Ephesian church with a few, what we would consider massive Prayers there.

And so it's helpful for us to see how these right desires are formed in. Biblical praying, because we want to learn Not only from this scriptural example, of prayer. But as we pray, more and more biblically, we want our minds to learn, we want our Learn what christ-like thinking is like we want our heart to learn what Christ like feeling is like this was one of those progressions.

From the first century. Of the Reformation, or at least the Western European Reformation in the 1500s to the 1600s. Uh, whereas for instance, in the three forms of unity, they identified the primary means of Grace, the ordinary means of Grace as word and sacrament, By the time of the Westminster standards, there was growth in understanding that the means of Grace our word sacrament and prayer.

That there is a fellowship with God. Uh, been coming to him in Union with the son by the help of the spirit by which he Not only. To which he responds by acting, but which he has designed In in which to work upon us. That praying to him is itself.

One of the means by which he conforms us to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, as we consider, This prayer in verses 30 through 32 with its book ends. Um, I know that when I shop, when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ in verse 29 and the other book end.

Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen. Verse 33. We see a number of things about this. Um, about the Christian Ministry, coming out as he prays. We see the faith of the Christian Ministry. In verse 29. Uh, which by which he teaches us to pray, confidently.

We see the foundation of the Christian Ministry in verse 13 by which we learn to pray trinitarianly. We see the fight of the Christian Ministry in the first half of verse 31. By which we learn to pray for deliverance. We see the favor. Of the Christian Ministry, the the pleasantness, The Joy at, which it aims in the second half of verse 31 and into verse 32.

And so we learned to pray with and for Praying for the Saints joy and praying with our own Joy. And then in the last place, we see the fellowship. Of the Christian Ministry. In verse 33. By which we learn to pray and fellowship with God. Our pray in communion with God and pray for greater.

Communion with God. So first, the faith of the Christian Ministry he says, but I know That when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. How does he know that? How does he know that he's going to come with the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ?

Wouldn't you like to know, That when you sat down to do your secret worship, you would do it in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Wouldn't you like to know when you gathered your family at the table or in the living room or wherever it is, for family worship that you were doing?

So in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ? Wouldn't we want to know as we are gathered here? For hearing the word preached, and for calling upon God's name together, tonight that we are doing. So, in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, The answer is we can know because we are doing those things that Christ has appointed.

We can know in the same way he was confident in verse 14. Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren. That you also are full of goodness filled with all knowledge. Able also to admonish one another By which he certainly didn't mean that the Roman Believers had ceased to sin and therefore were full of all goodness or that they had suddenly somehow become omniscient and full of all knowledge without Exception.

But rather they were full of that goodness and full of that knowledge which was necessary for what Christ had appointed to use them to do. And so are we? It is a fullness that depends upon Christ. What Christ has merited he cannot be denied. And so whatever the Lord Jesus has come and lived and died and risen again and descended and taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high enthroned now in glory Uh, whatever.

He has merited will not be denied him. And so, when Paul goes to Rome, everything that Jesus died to obtain by Paul sending Paul to Rome, Jesus will obtain What Jesus has merited, what he has earned, what he has won. By his finished work. Cannot be denied him. And what he has designed cannot lack.

His provision. And so we ought to pray in confidence and serve in confidence that Christ will get his just desserts. That Christ will accomplish what he has designed to do. What a an antidote against anxiety? Looking forward in Ministry. Whether within your own life or in your household, with your neighbor, with a loved one in the church, But an anxiety, what an antidote to the anxiety as we look forward.

To Ministry or discouragement as we look back on it. If only we might remember by the spirits ministering, his word to us. That Christ is getting. As he lived and died for. We do often fall shorts, don't we? And we often fail to see. What we had hoped the particulars or the details, That we had hoped for and one or another.

Of these situations. But it would be arrogant indeed to think. That we are of such great Imports, such critical importance. That our falling short was somehow going to stop the Lord Jesus. From getting what he had designed to do. And so there's the faith of the Christian Ministry teaching us to pray confidently.

We might add with humility there. Because we must pray with confidence in that which Christ has earned and that which Christ has designed. Rather than confidence that all will go. According to our words, Well, that's the faith of the Christian Ministry in verse 29, we see. Also the foundation of the Christian Ministry and it is called himself.

He says, I beg you Brethren. Through the Lord, Jesus Christ, and through the love of the spirit that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me. And now, who is it? Then That is uh, that is in the Lord Jesus Christ and enabled. Upheld by the love of the spirit.

Is it Paul as he writes to the Roman Christians and pleads with them? Or is it the Roman Christians as they respond to his plea and pray and the answer is yes. The answer is yes. Certainly. Uh, the the first grammatical way to read this, both are valid grammatically.

Um, but the first The first way the most ordinary natural way to read this is that it is in Union with Christ that he is making this plea. It is by the love of the spirit that he is making this plea. How could you deny someone Who is asking you to do something in Union with the Lord Jesus, or by the love of God, the Holy Spirit.

And certainly We ought not claim those things for anything that the scripture has not commanded the Apostle here. Is claiming those things and his authority as an apostle carried Along by the Holy Spirit. But if he is asking them by virtue of Union with Christ and the love of the spirit, Then certainly, as is also grammatically.

Possible. And Quite probable that he means both. He is urging them that their praying would be done to the father through the son by the help. Of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, of course, who sheds abroad in our hearts. God's love to us. As we heard in chapter 5, the Holy Spirit who stirs up in us.

Love back unto God that childlike love by which we call him Abba father. Holy Spirit who produces in us. Also love then for And so, as the holy spirit is, That is loving us and producing love in us. What is he doing? He's applying to us our Union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not United to the father we're adopted by the father. Not United to the spirit. We are in dwelt by the spirit, but we are united by the son. We have a shared life with him. He calls us bone of his bone and Flesh of his flesh. What a great privilege it is.

To be United to the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, there is nothing. So christ-like. As. Calling, upon the name of the father. There is nothing. So of Christ, like As having. Love from the spirit. And being made to love by the spirit God himself. Is the foundation of all of Christian Life.

And of Christian Ministry. And of Christian prayer. And so, here he is teaching teaching them and teaching us to pray trinitarianly. If we view, God himself as the ultimate Supply, For Christian Ministry then we will pray for Ministry. It is quite telling how easy it is in our remaining flesh, whether we're talking as a pastor, an elder Or a father, or a daughter, or a neighbor, whatever we are.

Uh, whatever the various roles are that the Lord has applied to us. It is quite telling that we can get so busy doing it. That we become rather prayerless. Well, that exposes in us, doesn't it a little bit of that functional atheism, a little bit of that practical atheism, that we don't really believe that God, the Father Son and Holy Spirit has to accomplish What we are aiming at in spiritual things, but indeed, he must, it is only his Almighty power.

That can do spiritual work. Especially the great spiritual work of resurrecting. A dead soul or Preserving and protecting and growing a A partially Sanctified Saint until he is fit for and enters

Glory. So if we view God himself as the supply for Ministry we will pray. If you do if you view, God himself as the supply for Ministry, then you will pray.

That is a necessary consequence of believing in Grace alone. And if we view, God himself as The supply for our ministry will shape how we think and pray We won't just come to God as if He has part of his his character part of his. Description filled out and is omnipotent Almighty.

And then we just come to him. However, we like according to our own thoughts and our own feeling no, you must come to the God who is The Triune God who is from all eternity, there is only one true and living God. And so, he, if he has revealed himself foremost in his son and if he has brought you to himself in his son, and if he has done that by working on you, and in you, by his Spirit, then you need to come to him in Union with the son laying claim to that shared life.

That shared adoption that you have with God, the son, the second person of the godhead, So, Independence upon the third person of the godhead, God the Holy Whom Jesus has poured out that he might be with you and in you And so we ought to seek To pray trinitarianly.

Because God himself is the foundation of all Christian Ministry. In the third place, we see the fight of Christian Ministry. Here, especially in the first half of verse 31, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe Um, Too often, I think we We approach Christian Ministry as if it were all If it were only a project, we forget that it's a war.

There's an analogy here to Growing in Holiness. You remember the language in the first half of chapter eight, sanctification is not merely. Not merely an Endeavor, an effort, a project that you've been assigned by Jesus for the rest of your life. No it is a war, it is a mortal battle.

Your sin is trying to kill you. And if you do not kill it, if you are not killing it, you will die. One of you must die either you or your remaining sin. As a war is a battle. And we need to be delivered as the Apostle himself in view of this battle.

At the end of chapter, 7, cried out, who will deliver me? From the body of this death. Well, he's also praying to be delivered from those in Judea. Who do not believe. Does he love them? Absolutely, he loves them. He's told us in the opening, three verses of chapter nine about how he's uh, he God is his witness that he has deep sorrow continual and great sorrow for them and wishes that he himself might even have been able to be accursed, uh, to be condemned so that they could be saved.

He testifies again. Solemnly chapter 10 and verse 1. Uh, heart's desire and prayer to God for them. Is that they might be saved, but then he calls them, an 11 chapter, 11 verse, 28 enemies on account to the gospel. Not that Paul is their enemy but they have made themselves enemies of God and enemies of Christ and enemies of the gospel of Christ.

And they are real enemies. Here, we have many enemies and we must name them as such We've just mentioned how chapter 8 verses 1 through 14 named flesh. The the remaining fleshliness remaining sinfulness from our former nature as an enemy. We ought to identify it as an enemy and be at War.

Know, of course, that Satan is an enemy. The the God of Peace. Is going to crush Satan under their feet shortly. The Apostle is going to say in another 20 verses, The God of Peace, the god of love so long as there are enemies. He is also the god of war.

There is. In a world where that which is hostile to the object of your love exists. In a world in which that, which is hostile. To the object of your love exists. Loving means hating. Cannot love everything. When there are two things that enmity at odds, With one another.

So we must recognize the Flesh and enemy. We must recognize Satan as an enemy, but we must recognize that there are real human enemies too. The fight is real. The battle is real. Even while we longed for the Salvation, of those who have made themselves, our enemies, We must recognize that they genuinely and truly are.

Enemies of us and enemies of the Gospel. A big part of proper Christian praying in this world is to pray to be delivered. From our enemies. The Lord teaches us to pray that a couple of times and what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. Thy kingdom come. There's a prayer for deliverance from our enemies.

And concludes, of course, a prayer in that way. Deliver Us from the evil. For thine is the kingdom. And here he asks, the Romans The Believers in Rome. Rather to pray that he would be delivered from those in Judea. Who do not believe. God is a great deliverer. Here's a great judge and Savior.

He is much glorified when we pray for deliverance, when we pray to be saved from our enemies, And so, The recognition. That Christian Ministry is a fight. Teaches us to pray for deliverance. Well, we are to pray, confidently, and trinitarianly, and for deliverance. We're also to pray, joyfully. And for Jo, This is what we have called.

In the outline, the favor. Of the Christian Ministry. So verse 31, and to verse 32, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the Saints, not just that the service would be efficient and effective, but that the Saints would be pleased. Uh, by that, which he is serving that that service which he comes to render to seal unto Macedonia and Decay and Christians.

That fruit as he said in verse 28, not only that they would be pleased. By his that the Saints in Jerusalem. Uh, would be pleased by his service to them. But also that Paul himself might find pleasure in coming to minister to the Saints in Rome. Verse 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God.

And then that when he's with them, the two of them together. Uh, may be refreshed gladdened in one another's Fellowship. As he says in the end of verse 32, and may be refreshed together. With you. And so the second half of verse 31, and all of verse 32 really is full of different delightings.

The Saints delighting in his coming to minister of Jerusalem. His own delighting in his coming. Then to minister at Rome and their delighting together. When he arrives. And as you pray for this Joy, you participate in the anticipation. Don't pray for Joy with grief. And and, and or even coldness.

You pray for Joy with joy. As we do that which pleases God, one of the things that we ought to seek is that we too might be pleased. This reminds us of The relationship of. Romans 12 1 to Romans 12 2. I beseech, you, therefore Brethren by the mercies of God, that you present, your bodies, a Living Sacrifice, holy acceptable, to God.

So doing that, which pleases God, Which is your reasonable service and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that they that you may prove or approve. What is that? Good and acceptable and perfect will of God. And so good, and pleasing and perfect.

That we would. That we would grow in being pleased by What pleases God? And so as we come and we pray and we learn how to pray from what the Bible and whose word is the Bible. It's God's word and we want to pray for things that are according to his will.

One of the things that we are doing is we are finding out from the Bible, what pleases God? And as we learn to ask those things in submission to end what pleases God becomes more and more pleasant to us, we come more and more to be pleased by what pleases God.

And then as God does it, we are all the more gladdened Greatly. Then God has designed prayer, biblical prayer to fill us. Not just with Good feelings. Happy Feelings. Positive Vibes. But to fill us with his own. Jesus came to his Joy might be in us and one of the things that he uses to do that.

Is by teaching us to pray to enjoy the things that please God. And so, the favor of the Christian Ministry, praying for the Saints. In the last place. Then verse 33 The Fellowship of the Christian Ministry. Yes, there's Fellowship between him and them wherever Believers are physically. They know that they are united in Christ.

We are seated with him in the Heavenly places, as he teaches us. In Ephesians. But we lift our hearts. There, when we come and we pray and This can be very sweet to you before. There was Zoom or even Skype or telephones or telegraphs. Two Christians. Uh, who were far apart in distance could already meet at the throne of grace.

And praying for the things that are according to God's will could have an agreement and a fellowship in Union with Christ by the love of the spirit as they come to the Even in their different places even in their different times. And so, there is this benediction, but it also concludes is a conclusion to the prayer.

Now, the God of Peace be with you all. Amen, he prays that God's Fellowship would be with them and indeed it is true, his desires and praise. I'm sure that God's the the God of Peace would be with them in all of their Christian life. But especially in their praying, This is what Paul pastorally desires for the Roman Christians that they would know the fellowship and communion of the Living.

God fellowship with and communion with the Living God in their praying to him. Prayer, as A means of Grace. Is in part a means by which God gives us to enjoy fellowship with himself. This, of course. Uh absolutely shatters. That unbelieving fleshly question if God God already knows why pray.

If God is giving to you to have fellowship with him by means of praying. Who cares that he already knows you get to have fellowship with God, pray. Even if we had not been commanded, even if we had been merely invited, how could we not take up such an invitation And so the Apostle dangles, this sweet at the end of his prayer request.

Now the god of Peace be with you all. Uh, how encouraging it would be among us of sometimes when we're asking for. For prayer from someone else perhaps in the congregation or another believer. We would say to, And as you pray for me, May you know the fellowship of the Living God.

The one who made peace with you. By the blood of Jesus Christ to bring you near and has indwelt you by his Spirit. So that you enjoy the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and The Fellowship, the communion he shared, Operation, living with the Holy Spirit.

May you enjoy The Fellowship of God. As you pray for me. Indeed as the Apostle John says a second or third, Verse or so. Maybe a little further four or five in first John chapter one. We have fellowship with one another and truly, our fellowship is with God and with the Lord Jesus Christ, You see Ministry and praying for Ministry.

Isn't just something that is done for God and it isn't just something that is done independence, upon God. There's something that it has done that is done in fellowship with God, And how this causes us to desire, that others would be saved. That. Others would be Sanctified there. We are.

Praying enjoying fellowship with the Living. God enjoying the The reality, the experience of the peace that God has made for us with himself in the Lord, Jesus Christ and praying, praying that others would come to Faith. That they would come and enjoy this peace, praying that other believers would grow in Grace and grow in faith that God's peace would rule.

Their hearts, that God's peace would be the Arbiter in their hearts guard, their hearts In Christ, Jesus. And, All the while being driven to desire that in prayer and to ask for that in prayer by our enjoying it in the very moment that we are praying. The God of Peace.

Be with you all. Indeed, there is much to be learned. Not only from scripture examples of prayer like this one and others. But even by the praying itself, There is much training of the mind and training of the heart, our thoughts and affections. When we come, and we pray.

According. To the word of God. Amen.