Oct. 4, 2020 a.m.

PRAY FOR THESE THINGS

Reading: **1 Thess. 1:1-10**

***“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.”* (Rom. 10:1)**

* *“Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Tim. 2:4)
* Paul’s will was the same as God’s will.
* He was praying that the Lord’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
* Can we pray for anything more important? Will our will ever be more in line with His?
* This was a generic prayer – he was praying for all of his Jewish kinsman.
* Do we pray for others to be saved as earnestly as we pray for them to be healed?
* Do our hearts ache? Which is worse? For a loved one to die in the Lord or for a family member or friend to die outside of the Lord? The former suffers here for a little while, while the latter suffers for eternity. The first one goes to heaven, the latter goes to hell.
* This includes friends and family who call Jesus Lord and who believe they are doing many wonders in His name but are not doing the things that He says. (Matt. 7:21-23)
* Yes, they must hear, believe and obey the gospel to be saved.
* Others are not saved because we pray for them to be saved.
* Praying that they hear the gospel – which is the power of God to save. (Rom. 1:16)
* Is it us (me and you) that God has called to teach them? Are we capable of teaching them? Are we ready (prepared) to give an answer? (1 Peter 3:15)
* Are they not listening to you and me? Are we praying that someone might say something to open their heart? Or for something to happen to shake their already shaky foundation? We want them building on the rock and not the sand.

***“Praying always … and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”* (Eph. 6:18-20)**

* *“Continue earnestly in prayer … meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”* (Col. 4:2-4)
* *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you”* (2 Th. 3:1) (NKJV, Power BibleCD)
* Is this an area that God is very willing to work His will –where providence takes place?
* We see His providence throughout the book of Acts.
* How important is it to us that the gospel is preached to the lost? (see previous point)
* When Paul prayed for men to be saved, he also prayed for opportunities to teach them.
* When the doors were opened for men (and women) to go into the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, were we ready to support them?
* When a preacher gets a “Macedonian call,” are we ready to send them? (Acts 16:9-10)
* When the Holy Spirit says to send men out, are we ready to help them? (Acts 13:2-4)

***“Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”* (Luke 22:31-32)**

* Is Jesus praying for us still? Is the devil still asking God for us? (as he did with Job)
* The devil wanted to sift him as wheat – show that he was nothing but chaff
* Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. (33-34)
* Peter was weaker than he thought he was. He was in a dangerous place spiritually. Pride goes before a fall.
* We know what he was going to do in the following hours.
* But Jesus had not given up on him.
* Peter still needed to be converted, even after following Jesus for 3 and half years.
* Do you know someone who during these times is having their faith severely tested?
* When our faith is tested, our faithfulness is tested and this includes our character.
* We want them to pass the test so that they can strengthen others. (family, church)

***“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.”* (1 Th. 1:2-3)**

* How often do we thank God for our brethren on the basis of their work, labor and endurance?
* Do we have brethren whose faith is clearly seen by the work they do?
* Do we have brethren who are working in the kingdom while enduring suffering?
* At a time when it might seem easier to find fault with brethren (and sometimes there is reason to do so), let’s be thankful for the work/labor some are doing with love.
* Remember these and when and as often as we do, let’s thank God for them.

**Deeper prayers are prayers that are focused on spiritual things**

**The most important things – eternal things – the one needed thing**