

Series Title: A Closer Look: The Purpose and Power of Prayer

Sermon Title: Week 5: He's a miracle waiting on us to happen

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✠ **Counted worthy?**

- **Elementary school humiliation... otherwise known as school sponsored terrorism! DODGEBALL. Even worse, Gym teacher pulls out two job jocks, and says "time to pick sides"! NOO! No matter the sport, I was the last one picked. If you were the team captain, and you wanted to WIN, I was the last person you wanted on your team. Anyone relate?**
- **NOW... think of GOD. God has some work to do, and it is IMPORTANT. He's calling people to work with him.. he scans the crowd, and his eyes come to YOU. Would he pick you? ARE YOU WORTHY of being picked by God to be a partner with him in his work? NO! Of course not! Right? Listen to this...**

"All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God..."

- **Paul, writing to young church- we'll look at it fully in a moment. But this statement points to one of the core realities of the LIFE IN CHRIST that God lays out for us in scripture.**
- **Some religions paint divide between God and man, where man has little role and God does everything.**
- **Many more faith systems paint another great divide, where man does everything and God is distant/ passive. Deism. Unfortunately, many sincere people attempt to practice Christianity within this same framework.**
- **But the relationship we see in the NT between God and Man is something different altogether.**
- **Rather than life being about my complete insignificance to God, or God putting unbearable burden on us, Scripture reveals to us a God, through Christ, who invites us to join WITH Him. Who calls us into a divine partnership with him.**
- **ARE WE WORTHY OF GOD? No, we're not! But through His love and mercy, when we respond in faith- God creates within us a new spiritual life and identity- and then begins the miracle of His Holy Spirit working in us to bring transformation to our soul- to change how we actually live in our minds, our wills, and our emotions.**
- **At times God does this as we learn to trust and obey him through the very real, often very difficult, circumstances of life.... So that a person such as Paul could look at our lives and conclude "you will be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God".**

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 ³ *We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.* ⁴ *Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.* ⁵ *All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.*

- **God's is right in his judgment to allow us difficulty in life. DON'T MISS THIS- it is not our abilities, strength, or wisdom that makes us worth of God's Kingdom, but our TRUSTING God, loving him, faith in him- obeying him even when life is hard.**
- **This is NOT performance based acceptance!! It is a TRUST based relationship.**
- **Paul continues- even when we suffer, we have the hope and confidence that God is JUST, he holds the big picture.**

⁶ *God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you* ⁷ *and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.*

- **He continues... Reminded of Romans 12:19**

“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord

- **Now, thinking of these believers who were growing in their faith, expressing love for one another, and persevering (not losing hope) in the midst of great trials.... PAUL PRAYS that they would experience miracle of the...**

✠ The Divine Partnership

2 Thessalonians 1:11 *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.*

- **Make you... Ongoing work that would do..**
- **POWERFUL IMAGE of union, of partnership.**
 - **Gods power, that HE would bring to fruition. Same root word as ‘fruit’... that Gods life within you would cause the fruit of his spirit to grow- to happen in your life.... THIS FRUIT...**
 - **Your every desire for goodness. HUGE TRUTH... when we are living out of our union with Christ- trusting him... Christ is our life, motivated by HIS LOVE within us... OUR DESIRES will conform to HIS DESIRES.**
 - **Augustine: “Love God, and do what you will”**
 - **IN SAME WAY, Paul continues... that Gods power in us would bring to fruition YOUR EVERY DEED- actions- that are prompted by our FAITH.**

In our Divine partnership with Christ,

- We will experience **TRANSFORMATION**
 - **Worthy- God will continually form his nature, his character, within us (bottom of iceberg), so that it is expressed in how we actually live, who we are**
- We will desire to see God’s **GOODNESS**
 - **We will desire God’s goodness for people, this will change, form, the way we relate to people**
- Our faith in Christ will prompt us towards **GOOD WORKS**
 - **This brings us to a great New Testament Reality. RESOUNDING NT truth is that we are made right with God, forgiven, redeemed, set free from sin, JUSTIFIED.. by FAITH. Romans 3:28**

"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law" (Romans 3:28)

- **And yet EQUALLY as true, once we enter into this faith, and by His Spirit God brings to life what once was dead- our spirit- makes us new, and HIS SPIRIT, HIS LIFE, becomes our life... once this happens, this new nature will be expressed IN HOW WE LIFE.**
- **James puts it simply- Faith without works is dead. (James 2:26)**
- **YOU SEE.. Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians, and for us, is that we would experience what the NT describes as the inevitable result of genuine faith. That God’s spirit would spur us on to GOOD DEEDS. To a life that expresses God’s love for people.**

Philippians 2:12-13 *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

Colossians 1:28-29 *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*

- **We see this theme throughout the NT/NC. A powerful example is a prayer of Paul in opening of his letter to the believers in Colosse... Colossians. Here Paul again prays that we would be worthy.**
- **KEY POINT- This divine partnership is a partnership in the GOSPEL. The work of the GOOD NEWS...**

✠ Partnership in the Gospel

Colossians 1:1-8

³ *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—*

⁵ *the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶ that has come to you.*

*In the same way, **the gospel is bearing fruit** and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.*

⁷ *You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.*

- **Compelling image here. Profile of Colossian believer... poor. Under duress. Life was not easy. AND YET.. Paul describes them as a people whose faith was FLOURISHING. They were known for their love, of their hope, their understanding of GRACE.**
- **THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR US!**
- **SEEING THIS, Paul is moved to a continuous prayer for them- prayer Spirit will move us to pray...**

✠ Paul's continuous prayer

Colossians 1:9-14 *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have **great endurance and patience**, ¹² and **(IN MIDST OF THIS ENDURANCE AND PATIENCE...)** giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

We live worthy of the Lord when...

- Our lives are bearing **FRUIT**

- **Obedient. Fruit of the Spirit. Memorize Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

- We are growing in **KNOWLEDGE** of God.

- **Not just head knowledge, heart knowledge. Experience! Grand canyon.. you can know about it, and you can KNOW IT, by living it**

- We receive God's power for **ENDURANCE** and **PATIENCE**

- **To not give up. Trust, one step at a time.**

- **AND, knowing that we need endurance and patience, because life can be hard... in the midst of this...**

- We live with a heart of **GRATITUDE**

- **Why? Because we have been rescued. Redeemed. Forgiven. Brought us into his family, his kingdom, and our hope, our future, our inheritance, and our RIGHT NOW... is that we are his.**
- **Last thought... Divine partnership/ Partnership in the gospel.. also...**

✠ **A partnership in Glory**

2 Thessalonians 1:12 *We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- **Wow. That God's Glory would be seen.... In you.**
- **What is our glory? It is the eternal value of Christ's life in us, being lived through us....**

– **PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, we pray that we will grow in faithfulness and love so that we increasingly reflect your nature and your perseverance, even in difficult circumstances. We pray this so that our lives will increasingly reflect the worthiness of Your Salvation and Your Life within us that you have freely already given to us.

Jesus, we pray that your power within us would fulfill and accomplish everything you lead us to do, and every action, thought, or emotion that is prompted by our faith in You. And Lord, I pray that in all things your name may be glorified in us, and that our lives may reveal your Glory, according to your Grace to us and in us