

Read Colossians 4:2-4

1. What does Paul ask the Colossians to pray for him as a gospel proclaimer?

2. How might this relate to our prayers for our link missionaries? Are there particular opportunities or issues of boldness to pray about?

Again a chance to consider some specifics, and how they might be prayed for in line with God's word.

Conclusion

1. How would you summarise how we can pray for our link missionaries even when we don't have specific prayer points?

We can pray these things at any time, with or without specific prayer points.

2. How might these passages shape our prayers for them even when we do have specific prayer points?

Good for people to see that we need to keep the big picture in mind even when we pray for very specific things. The link missionaries may send very detailed prayer points – some things may seem very practical and concrete. Great for people to keep praying these things within a broader gospel framework.

Eg. Praying for a house to find, but pray it will be one that increase opportunities to meet neighbours.

Lets' keep praying the big picture – both for our link missionaries and they work alongside. Pray for bold proclamation, a godly lifestyle and faithful endurance, all to the glory and praise of God.

pray

COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

Introduction

We all know we should be praying for missionaries. It's a motherhood and apple pie sort of statement. But what should we be praying for? Do we need to have up to date prayer points in order to pray? Even when we have their specific prayer points, are there other things we should still be praying?

In this study we will look at Colossians 1:1-14 and observe how Paul prays for the Colossian Christians, who he has never met. We will consider how his model might shape our prayers for both our link missionaries and the people who they work amongst (who we have most likely also never met).

Opening question

What do you pray for people when you don't have their prayer points? (Do you pray?)

Read Colossians 1:1-14

1. From verses 3-8, what do we learn about the gospel and the Colossians? How is it described? How did it come? What impact did it have?

Things like: came via Epaphras, it is a word of truth, a word of grace, it is bearing fruit among them and all over the world, it has resulted in faith, hope and love, it leads Paul to thank God.

2. What is Paul's response to hearing about the gospel's reception among the Colossians?

He thanks God for them.

Follow up question: is this what we do when we hear of things happening elsewhere. Do we hear?

After thanking God for his work among the Colossians, in verses 9-12 Paul prays for these people among who Epaphras has been working.

1. What does it mean for them to be 'filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding'?

Fullness is a key word in Colossians. The basic gist of Colossians is that because Jesus is the fullness of God, then if they are in Christ then they also have fullness. Don't need to look elsewhere for other extra experiences. See 1:19, 2:1-3; 2:9-10; 3:16; 4:12. Being filled with the knowledge of his will in this context is essentially knowing Jesus, standing firm in him, and in his word. Then they will have all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

2. How do verses 10-12 flesh out for us what it means to be 'filled with the knowledge of his will'? (Or, what is God's will for them?)

All the things in the next few verses are filling out what the phrase is on about. So it is about living a godly life, growing in knowledge, and patiently enduring.

3. Is this different to what you first thought when you read the phrase?

For some the phrase may have had a very intangible feeling – knowing God's will perhaps in certain circumstances. Or even a mystical sense. But the idea of it is 'spiritual' not mystical. That is, it means the sort of life that is controlled by God's spirit. One of godliness and endurance and patience. This is God's will for people. This is what Paul prays for them.

This is the content of Paul's prayer for these new Christians Epaphras has been working with. These would be great things to be praying for the people your link missionaries work alongside (remember to pray for them and not just your link missionary).

Think about one of your link missionaries. How could we pray for the people they work with? Think of some things under these headings:

You may need to do some prep work to get a better sense of the work your link missionaries are doing – read newsletters, speak with your minister etc.

1. Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord: Are there particular issues of godliness that the church struggles with in that location?

2. Bearing fruit in every good work: Are there opportunities we should pray for the Christians to take hold of in good works?

3. Growing in the knowledge of God: Are there certain areas where they would benefit from greater understanding?

4. Strengthened for endurance and patience: What are the trials and troubles Christians face in those places?

We can also pray these things for our link missionaries as well.

Think of one of your link missionaries – what could we pray under each of these headings?

1. Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord

2. Bearing fruit in every good work

3. Growing in the knowledge of God

4. Strengthened for endurance and patience

These are also great things to be praying for ourselves!