

April 23, 2017

Prayer is one of the ways we communicate with God. It is conversation - talking together - listening together - with a generous, caring Friend. Prayer conversation with God can be many things. It can be:

praising God's great goodness,
asking for a particular need to be answered,
listening to God or listening for God's message or response,
wrestling and questioning God about a problem we have,
requesting God's wisdom or presence or healing or . . . ,
questioning and challenging God,
thanking God for life or blessings or . . . , and on.

Our congregation has a Prayer Chain Ministry that is praying for your prayer requests. You are invited to fill in the prayer request card on the back of the Welcome card, fill in your prayer request and either put it in the offering plate or give it directly to Pastor Wendee. Following worship, a member of the Prayer Ministry Team will collect the prayer requests, will give Pastor Wendee a list of all the requests and will email them to the Prayer Chain who will pray for your request through the week. Please be sure the check the box(es) designating how and where you want your prayer request(s) shared. Thank you for the privilege of allowing us to share in your life through prayer.

You are invited to pray for the following prayer requests:

- Dick W - additional health issues, in cardiac unit as of this morning (Monday)
- from Alfredo C - for Marissa - in need of God's strength, guidance, and grace. Single mom with 2 girls aged 8 and 3.
- from Joan L - continued prayer for my brother Mark who is back in the hospital with pneumonia.
- from the South East District Office: Milwaukee: ZAO (new church start), their pastor Jonah Holm, ZAO is located at 523 E Clarke St. Milwaukee, WI 53212.
- for our shut-ins: Dorothy S, Eileen S, Marilyn S, Gwen S, Louise L, Jean F, Dave and Jeanne H, Marge D, Pat S, Donna S, Eleanor P, Jean B
- Prayers of celebration for anniversaries, birthdays, and other special occasions

2 Timothy 1:3-11

New King James Version (NKJV)

Timothy's Faith and Heritage

³ *I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,* ⁴ *greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,* ⁵ *when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.* ⁶ *Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.* ⁷ *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

⁸ *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,* ⁹ *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,* ¹⁰ *but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,* ¹¹ *to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

Welcome to Faith Connections! Faith Connections! can be used in many ways. Some people may choose to just recycle the paper it is printed on. Others may read it front to back in a single sitting. Others may use it to help guide their meditation of the Scriptures during the week, daily or often. May it be helpful in your reflection of the Scripture as it applies to your faith this week. ~ Oliver

Sunday – In this week’s lesson, the writer opens with the comment, “I give thanks…” Paul sent this letter to Timothy. In his opening, he points out what Paul’s relationship was to God, Jesus, and the Scriptures. In so doing, he also acknowledges the heritage Timothy has. Paul also acknowledges that the road is not without tears and sorrow at times.

Paul remembers Timothy in his daily prayers with a clear conscience. Paul also comments that he longs to see Timothy again. Paul is reminded of Timothy’s sincere faith, which first lived in his grandmother, Lois. Can people see our faith? Do they see it in how we act? Do we remember those we care about and our fellow believers in our daily prayers?

Monday – Sometimes I wonder do people see my faith through my actions and words? What kind of faith do they see in me? Is it a faith I can be proud of? In my family, our ancestors have been believers for many generations. That doesn’t make me any better than those who came to know Jesus and God today. We are all on our own journey, but we can join others on our journey and support each other through our prayers as well!

Is your faith from your ancestry? Or did it begin with you? I don’t think that matters as much as you having your own faith and following God daily. What is your opinion?

Tuesday – In verses 6 – 7, Paul talks about “fanning into flame the gift of God”. What did he mean? He said he imparted that gift to Timothy through the laying on of his hands. I wonder how many of us have the gift of God in us. Paul has been gone many centuries. Is it possible that the gift of God could be handed down from generation to generation? Or was Paul the only one with that gift?

Wait! Paul wasn’t in the room when the disciples received the Holy Spirit in the upper room on Pentecost. How did HE receive the gift of God? Who laid hands on Paul? How did Paul get to be so bold with his faith? Is it possible that the Holy Spirit touched Paul and strengthened his faith? How can we receive the Holy Spirit? Will we, too, be given the strength to face trials head-on? Courage to do God’s will? It sounds so much like a dream?

Wednesday - In verses 8 – 9, Paul warns Timothy to not be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus or of Paul being a prisoner. Paul tells him to become like Paul. Join Paul in his suffering for the Gospel. I wonder how many of us would be willing to speak out to give testimony to Jesus’ teachings if it meant we would be made to suffer because we spoke out. What if we were to be walking along a dark street, and we came upon a gang of 15 people

beating up a single person? Would we have the courage to step forward and stand between them and the person they are beating? Or, would we try to avoid getting involved? After all, it’s between them and the one person. They aren’t bothering us. Or maybe we see someone steal a TV from a neighbor’s house? Would you really be willing to be a “squealer”?

Thursday – Verses 9 – 10, Paul says, “He has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done, but because of His own purpose and grace.” Does this mean we cannot earn grace? If we can’t earn it, how can we receive it? Maybe, grace is actually a gift. A gift that is given to us freely. All we have to do is accept God’s grace? If it is free, why then do we so often struggle with our lack of ability to be worthy of God’s grace? Interesting. Paul said, “Jesus, Who destroyed death and has brought life and light to light through the Gospel.” How could Jesus destroy death? People still die, right? I thought Jesus destroyed death? What did Paul mean when he said Jesus destroyed death?

Friday - In verse 11, Paul stated: “And of this Gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.” If we are to become like Paul, then I guess that should mean we need to consider ourselves appointed. How can we serve Jesus and God through this appointment? How can we also become heralds, apostles, and teachers of the Gospel?

What does God want us to do? Do we need to quit our jobs and walk around homeless to proclaim the Gospel? Is it possible to proclaim the Gospel, even at work, school, or play?

Saturday – Let’s re-read the lesson, from 3 – 11. What does this passage say to you now? Do you see a message in it for you? Or is it just a message for Timothy? Is there something in this passage that still holds true, even today, nearly 2,000 years after it was written?

The Bible is often referred to as the *Living Word*. Do you ever feel like, though a chapter or passage was written so long ago, it still has meaning for you today? How can we become more like Paul was writing about? Where can we go to receive the gift of God? How can we fan it into flame?

Dear God,

Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit, that I may be a strong and faith-filled servant to Your Gospel and Your grace. Let others see Your light shining in me and want to follow You.