

Philippians 1:9-11 Let Love Abound

I am sure that you are familiar with the phrase: Prayer changes things – It is true – it absolutely does.

A)Prayer is a powerful! – But sometimes knowing how to pray can be a little challenging for us.

B)Most people would never associate prayer with pop music,

1)but there is an interesting country song that's been around for a few years by a guy named Jaron Lowenstein. He goes by Jaron.

C)it's a song called "I pray for you."

1)It's a song based upon the bitter breakup that he had with his girlfriend, and he puts an interesting twist on prayer.

He said, "I haven't been to church since I don't remember when.

Things were going great till they fell apart again.

So I listened to the preacher, he told me what to do. He said, you can't go hating on others who have done wrong to you.

Sometimes we get angry, but we must not condemn. Let the good Lord do his job and you just pray for them."

D)Solid theology right – we would agree with that!

Now here is the chorus to his song,

"I pray your breaks go out running down a hill."

"I pray a flower pot falls from a window sill and knocks you in the head like I'd like to.

I pray your birthday comes and nobody calls.

I pray you're flying high when your engine stalls.

I pray all your dreams NEVER come true.

Just know wherever you are, honey, I pray for you."

Now hopefully that is not descriptive of your prayer life! HOPEFULLY DEEPER – THAN THAT!

One of the great things about the Bible is it records several prayers for us! –

A)Listen to David Pray – Kings pray – Jesus pray

Aa)And Paul – Paul was a prayer warrior, - We get to hear him pray for the Church in Ephesus 2X

B)Recorded prayers for the believers in Colossae – Thessalonica –

1)His friends Timothy and Philemon

C)And here in the book of Philippians we get to hear him praying for the Church in Philippi

D)Cool thing about these prayers: All inspired by God –

1)Bible is inspired by God – God breathed –

Dd)His Holy Spirit breathed into the men and women of the Bible what he wanted to say.

E)These prayers give us tremendous insight into 2 things

➤ #1 What God wants to do in us

➤ #2 How we can be praying for others

Today we are going to consider Paul's Prayer for the saints in Philippi – Start reading in V. 3

³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy.

V. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Now the theme of Paul's prayer for them is Love!

Love is to be the Key attribute in the life of a Christian

A)Any Tina Turner fans in the House today – Always afraid to admit that – Ok – Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

B)Her records have grossed over \$180 million dollars world wide Her biggest hit – was a question: What's Love got to do with it?

C)Here is how God would answer the question – What's love got to do with it? – EVERYTHING

D)THE MOST FAMOUS BIBLE VERSE: John 3:16 begins like this **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.”**

E)Apostle John tells us in his epistle that God is Love – it is the defining mark of his Character

Paul the apostle would write: 1 Corinthians 13:1 Now these three remain Faith, Hope and Love – the greatest of these is Love

A)Jesus himself would declare love to be the defining mark of the Christian faith

B)By this they will know that you are my disciples: By your – Bible Knowledge? – your great songs? –

1)BY YOUR LOVE – ONE FOR ANOTHER

C)So it should not surprise us here in the book of Philippians that when we hear Paul praying for the church – the key thing on his mind is their love

BREAK this down this morning by considering 4 attribute of mature Love!

#1 Our Love should be Plentiful v/ 9 and notice, **“and this I pray that your love may abound still more and more.”**

A)The word abound means to super abound or to exceed a fixed number or a fixed measure.

B)Now, it's evident that they already loved one another.

1)Paul felt their love, and Paul makes note of it in this book.

C)But in V.9 he says – I pray that **your love** (had it- already doing it) **may abound still more and more.”**

D)Big idea: Christian love is always to be GROWING

1)Picture a River goes from a trickle – to free flowing!!!- MOVING

“A man can be a good doctor without loving his patients, or a good lawyer without loving his clients, or a good geologist without loving rocks or science, but a man cannot be a good Christian without love.”

Dwight L. Moody

LOVE IS THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF OUR FAITH

A)Love is to be growing – Overflowing out of us.

B)If I were to ask your wife – your kids – the people you work with or live by to name your 3 greatest attributes

1)WOULD LOVE BE ON THE LIST!

C)Paul is praying that their love would – abound – overflow –

1)that it would be what they were known for!

Now when Paul writes – I believe that he has a specific DEMONSTRATION of love in Mind.

A)Paul wrote a similar thing to the Church in Thessalonica

B)1 Thessalonians 3:12. Let me read it to you. **“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other.”**

C)So The Demonstration of love – Paul is referring to is their love for one another –

Why is that important?

A)I think it's important because sometimes it's easier to love people you never see than people you see every day.

B)It is Easy to say: I love the people in Uganda – or I love the people in NZ

1)I love and have a heart for those who are lost

C)But the people in your own home or in your own work space, it's sometimes more difficult.

1)So I think he is praying that their love for one another would overflow, would abound more and more.

D)That is what Jesus said as well – by this they will know..... Your love for ONE ANOTHER!

1)Defining Mark –Yelp Facebook – a loving place

Interesting, one of the Church Historian's named Tertullian made mention in his writings that when the church started growing rapidly in the Roman Empire,

A)that the government sent spies into different congregations

B)because they were afraid that this new group of citizens, these Christians, would be very disloyal to the Roman government.

1)So one of the spies, went into a church came back, and wrote this report.

"These Christians are very strange people." ☺ -
So different from the norm

They speak of one by the name of Jesus who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time.

(One of the things that made – the Early church lived with a belief in the soon return of Jesus)

And my how they love Him, and my how they love one another.

Interesting to me that an unbelieving spy in a Christian congregation made note of the fact that they loved one another so intensely.

So take that little test in your mind right now.

A)And ask yourself this, does your own love abound?

Aa)Would that be a word that describes the expression of your love?

B)Think about your marriage. Is your love toward your spouse an abounding love?

1)Or in your home toward your children, or toward your parents, or among your friends?

C)Would you say that that is a good description of your own love experience in your life?

You're the kind of person that love just keeps growing and growing and abounding more & more?

A)You say, is that even possible? Well, yes it is possible. It is possible because in Romans 5 Paul said, **"the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."**

B)The Love of God is being poured into us – for the very purpose of being poured out of us- to the world around us.

1)The love of God has been poured out or literally it gushes out.

C)**Shed abroad in our hearts** - implies there is no limit to it at all.

What that means then is that we have an unlimited capacity to love.

A)If we are abiding in Christ – no one in our sphere of influence should ever feel **LOVE STARVED** from us.

B) **SO** Our love then should be plentiful. That's the first attribute of a mature love.

#2 our love should be perceptive.

A)Now watch what he does.

B)Paul could have just said, in this I pray that your love may abound still more and more period.

C)But he doesn't do that he gives definition to what their love is to look like

D)He says, **"that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment."**

This is important: Paul is not naive.

A)He's not throwing out love like some kind of cliché where we are to tolerate and except everything kind of love

B)Love is to have parameters – the goal of love is defined in the next phrase in **v.10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent**

C) In order for our love to approve what is excellent or to be demonstrated in an excellent way

1)It is going to have to flow through the parameters of Knowledge and Discernment

D)Notice – He doesn't say **"that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge OR discernment."**

E)He says in knowledge and all discernment."

1)The **TWO GO TOGETHER – HAND IN HAND**

If love is a Flowing River - Knowledge and discernment are like filters that make the water pure

A)They are like - conduits that move it in the right direction

B) Get it to the ones who need it

C) KNOWLEDGE: Speaks of expert knowledge – mature knowledge –

1) knowledge that comes by experience.

D) Discernment is knowing the right reaction to the Knowledge in the moment.

Think of it this way: In Marriage – Husbands are told in 1 Peter 3 that they are to dwell with their wives in understanding.

A) **Understanding** encompasses both – Knowledge and Discernment

B) Question is the Husband going to be able to Dwell with his wife more in year 1 of marriage –

1) or year 20?

C) You would think year 20! – If they have a growing marriage and communication –

1) he is going to have more KNOWLEDGE

2) HE SHOULD HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE

D) SOMETIMES – knowledge is not the problem/ it is the Discernment – that is what is lacking

Example - In New Zealand Wifi calling –

A) Talking to Denise - she hates it when I am gone. Easier for me - I am super busy - time flies

B) So we are talking - and something happened that upset her.

1) I know her enough - I can hear it in her tone. She was upset –

C) I knew it - the shakiness in her voice was a big tip off.

D) We have been married for 32 yrs I know that voice

1) So I knew that something was wrong – when she shared it – it only confirmed my suspicion

E) What I lacked was the discernment to deal with it

F) Quite frankly it was a situation that even if I was home

1) I couldn't have done anything - it was one of those situations sort of powerless to do anything

So I said I was sorry babe - tried to be encouraging!

A) And then I did what I often do in a situation like that - I changed the subject – DIVERSION

B) Guess what: Wrong Choice - How can I tell? Knowledge is there! -

C) Again I know my wife well enough that when she gets silent on the other end –

1) I said or did the wrong thing.

D) Then she confirmed my suspicion by letting me know - changing the subject was the wrong choice

E) Now I wanted to approve what was excellent

1) Had Knowledge - **Needed Discernment**

So there is a need to grow in our Love having Knowledge and Discernment

A) Positive example from my Dad

B) I was a pretty good kid growing up – But I got my share of spankings –

1) Not a lot but my share –

Now my brother on the other hand – oh boy – did he get spanked – Not really he was a good kid too

A) My mom had it pretty easy: My bro goes here – younger by 6 yrs – bigger stronger

B) 11- 17 he picked me up and threw me on the hood of the car – **story for another day**

C) But I got my fair share of spankings – Last one around age 14

Around that time: I did something – don't remember what it was – Dad said get in the garage.

A) I don't know why – the garage was the place – punishment happened

B) We go out there and my dad starts taking off his belt –

1) now he never spanked me with his belt it was always with his hand –

C) he didn't read Dr. Dobson's book spank with an object like a spoon –not your hand -

1) so that they associate your hand with love.

D) My dad always spanked me with his hand – and I never ever doubted his love

E) But on this occasion – he starts taking off his belt and I was getting scared – because it hurt when he spanked me with his hand. – Even over my jeans –

I don't know if my pop went to spanking school – but man he was good at giving spankings

A) So he is taking off his belt – then he hands it to me and says – I want you to beat me with this –

B) I am going to take your punishment. I looked at him like really? – I am serious – here take it –

1) **So I took it and beat him GOOD!!!!!!!!!!**

C) No I started crying – started bawling – I CAN'T

1) Something clicked that day in me – about the Cross – the fear of God

Fear of God is not being FEARFUL OF GOD –

A) but the utter dread of doing something that would displease him because you don't want to hurt him –

B) it is the understanding that when we sin willfully that it is like driving the nails in Jesus again. –

C) I think that was the last day that I ever was taken out into the garage for a spanking

1) I became perfect after that – no not really – but something changed

Knowledge: He knew I needed punishment –

A) Discernment – He knew a different approach was needed. BIGGER LESSON

B) And so every parent knows this, love is expressed in different ways at different times to the same child.

C) One day a parent will give a gift to a child. Another day a parent will spank a child.

1) Both are legitimate expressions of love.

D) Or one time you know your child needs punishment –

1) but this time around instead of a spanking – instead of sending to their room – taking something away –

E) we need to sit and talk and afterwards go and get an ice cream together

This is Why I am not a big Procedure guy: I like procedures as guidelines: Standards

A) If you do X – Y is going to be the consequence – procedures set a standard –

B) But then in each situation you need Knowledge and Discernment – what do we need to do in this situation –

1) based on response – repentance – $X + Y = G$ for grace

Another example is that of Jesus Christ.

A) Sometimes He'd heal a person,

B) another day He would overturn the tables in the temple and drive out the money changers.

1) Both are expressions of love but in two different contexts.

B) One day Jesus would pronounce blessing on people

C) Another day he'd look at another crowd filled with Pharisees and say, you whitewashed sepulchers.

1) Both are expressions of love from the one who is the author of love himself.

D) So our love should be abounding, plentiful love,

1) but it should also **be perceptive**, having run within the filters of knowledge and discernment.

#3 attribute of mature love, and that is our love should be pure. Also verse 10, "that you may approve the things that are excellent." **notice the next phrase, "that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ.**

A) **Look at the word sincere.** You know what that is. When we say a person is sincere usually that we're paying them a compliment.

B) The word sincere in English comes from a Latin word. Actually, two words that sound very much like our words sincere.

1) I'll say it sine cera, sine cera, two Latin words, sine cera. That's where we get the word sincere.

C) Sine cera literally means without wax. Sine,

without, cera, wax.

See in ancient times, porcelain dealers and statue makers would sell their stuff.

A) And sometime to cover up a crack or repair a break – they would put wax in that spot –

B) If you were looking at the piece on a table or even if you picked it up – hard to see

1) But if you held it up in the sunlight – you could see where it had been repaired – **the light would expose what the wax covered.**

C) So the merchants would put out a little sign for their products that said: Sine Cera or without WAX

1) THESE ARE NOT PHONIES – THESE ARE LEGIT – THESE ARE PURE

So the idea is this, don't let your love be phony. Don't let it be mixed. Don't let it have an impure motive.

A) Romans 12:9 says "let love be without hypocrisy." That is, don't just pretend to love, really love.

B) Best example of insincere love is Judas Iscariot. Betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and betrays him with a what? A Kiss.

1) A kiss, an expression of love.

C) JUDAS Walks up to him in the garden, master, goes over to him and kisses him.

1) Jesus even remarked and said, you betrayed the son of man with a kiss? That was insincere, impure love.

So let's personalize it.

A) Let's say you give a compliment to somebody, a word of encouragement. What could be better?

B) Well, did you really mean what you said?

C) Or are you saying that because you want something from that person?

1) Now it's impure, now it's insincere.

D) GOD wants our love to be pure – to be sincere – without offense – or without blame until the day of Christ.

E) Which means we are going to have to say we are sorry and ask for forgiveness – when we don't love rightly.

1) Our spouse – Our friends – Our kids – our church family – people on the outside

F) LOVE ADMITS WHEN IT IS WRONG - That is part of growing in knowledge and Discernment

1) Sometimes the best expression of love is seen in the form of an apology - Seen in genuine repentance

So let's sum it up. Our love should be plentiful.

Our love should be perceptive.

Our love should be pure.

There's a fourth mark, and will close with this, Verse 11, "our love should be purposeful."

A) Verse 11, "being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God."

B) The goal or purpose is the glory of God! – Big picture: God's glory – God's fame –

Let your light so shine before men in such a way see good works and do what? Glorify your father who is in heaven

C) When we love rightly – not only do people like us – but God is glorified

John 15 – Abide in me and my word like the branch does in the Vine

A) Result: You will bear much fruit –

B) Paul mentions – fruits of righteousness
Right living – treating people rightly –

B) Reflecting Jesus - Then he said: And by this the father is gloried.... bear much fruit

The purpose of all love as a Christian is to glorify God.

A) You know how I know that? Because that's the purpose of all life.

B) All of life is to glorify God. I exist to glorify God. I do.

C) Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast

created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” KJV

D)“Do all to the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

The reason we want to be growing in Love – God will be glorified

A)in our lives our families – our church – our friendships – our community

B)So lets adopt this prayer: Pray for ourselves – our families – our church family

B)Marked by Mature Love – Love would abound – people around us –

1)LOVE SOAKED –

C)Love would be plentiful – perceptive – filters of Knowledge and Discernment – PURE - - without wax – without hypocrisy

D)God would be glorified – AMEN

E)IMAGINE.....