July 14, 2002 Northwest Bible Church

**Romans 1:8-9**

*The Priority of Prayer*

**INTRO**

 In Romans 1:8-15, Paul begins to set forth the **reasons** for writing this letter. But, before Paul gets to these reasons, he can’t help but express his prayer for them.

**I. THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER.**

 Prayer was a priority for Paul. It was the first item of business he wanted to communicate to the Romans. One of the marks of his life was that he was always praying for other believers. He opens most of his letters with a similar thanksgiving to God. See 1Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1Th. 1:2; 2Th. 1:3; 2Th. 2:13; 2Tim. 1:3; Philem. 1:4.

 There are different kinds of prayer. A helpful way to remember some of them is with the acrostic: A

 C

 T

 S

**II. THANKSGIVING TO GOD.**

 “my God” -

 “through Jesus Christ” -

 A. Thanksgiving to God for their faith. Cf. Eph. 1:15-16; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:3; Philem. 4-5. WHY was Paul thanking God for their faith? Because God is the source of their faith. *Faith is a gift of God*. What is implied here is explicitly stated in Romans 12:3.

 B. Thanksgiving to God for the proclamation of their faith. Paul is praising God because He had planted a group of believers in Rome.

 “whole world” = Roman empire not global sense for Paul knew the gospel had not yet gone to Spain and elsewhere, 15:20, 24, 28. This should help people to see that such words must be interpreted acc. to their first century meaning not how they are used today.

**III. INTERCESSION TO GOD.**

 In v. 9 Paul says that he is unceasing in his making mention of them to God. Notice how he calls God as his witness**.** This is no hyperbole, or comment made for effect. If Paul calls God who hears all things and knows all things to be his witness that he is unceasing in his prayers for them, we can be sure he is sincerely telling them the truth. Paul was a man devoted to prayer.

 The “mentioning” of them to God would fall in the category of intercession.

**IV. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD INTERCEDE FOR OTHER.**

 A. It is biblical.

 1) It is commanded. Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1; Jas. 5:16.

 2) Christ taught us to pray for others. Mt. 6:11-13.

 3) Practice of early church. Acts 1:14; 2:42; 12:5; Col. 4:12.

 4) Practice of the apostles. Acts 6:4.

 5) It was the constant request of Paul. See Romans 15:30.

 6) It is one of the godly ingredients found in the incense of heaven. Rev. 5:8.

 B. Because Satan does not want you to pray.

 C. Because of the blessings it brings.

 1) It blesses others. 2Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19.

 2) It blesses us.

 D. Because it makes us imitators of God.

 1) We become more like Christ. Romans 8:34.

 2) We become more like the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:26

 E. Because prayer often signals an imminent move of God.

**CONCLUSION**